

Rights group calls to lift restrictions on Palestinians

NEW YORK (AFP) — Human Rights Watch/Middle East called Friday on Israel to lift restrictions on Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, calling them the equivalent of "town arrest." "These new measures reduce whole communities to a form of town arrest, imposing hardship on hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians," the New York-based rights group said in a statement. Israel restricted the movement of Palestinian people and goods in the wake of the July 30 suicide bombing at a Jerusalem market that killed 13 civilians. "By blocking the movement of people and goods, including food and medical supplies, Israel is indiscriminately punishing entire communities and violating its obligations as an occupying power... to ensure that the food and health needs of the population be met," the statement said.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

14 Islamists rounded up in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — The Egyptian authorities have arrested over the past week 14 fugitive Islamist militants, including one sentenced to death in absentia for the murder of a Catholic school prefect, police sources said Saturday. Several of the suspects were arrested as they tried to return to Egypt from abroad with fake passports, the sources said. Eight of them, including convicted murderer Al-Gharib Al-Shahat Al-Johari, belong to Egypt's main Islamist group Al-Qamaa Islamiya, while two are members of Al-Jihad group and four belong to the Takfir Wa Hija group, they said.

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Lebanon accuses Israel of intentional killing of civilians, planning sabotage

Combined agency dispatches

LEBANESE FOREIGN Minister Faris Bouez accused Israel Saturday of intentionally killing Lebanese civilians to wreck a 1996 ceasefire.

"I am talking about accurate information obtained through wiretapping... of Israeli and pro-Lahad [Israel's South Lebanon Army militia] conversations in which orders were given to hit at civilians," Mr. Bouez told reporters.

"There is a clear decision to shell civilians and try to wreck the security understanding," Mr. Bouez said. The April 1996 ceasefire ended a 17-day Israeli onslaught in which about 200 Lebanese were killed. Under the terms of the ceasefire, Israel and pro-Lebanon Hizbollah guerrillas agreed not to target civilians.

Between Monday and Thursday, seven Lebanese civilians were killed by Israeli artillery and bombs planted by unknown assailants.

On Friday, Karyusha rockets hit northern Israel, wounding a woman. Hizbollah (party of God) said it did not fire the rockets.

Since the rocket attack, Israeli planes have attacked bases of both Hizbollah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — General Command.

"We have information that

several Israeli helicopters flew overnight over the area of Baalbek... and landed to prepare for certain plans in this area," Mr. Bouez said. He said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "wants to distract attention from the occupied territories to south Lebanon and halt implementation of the Oslo accords" with the Palestinians.

"He is looking to open a front against Lebanon and probably against Syria," Mr. Bouez said.

He spoke shortly before Israeli warplanes rocketed a Hizbollah base south of the town of Baalbek, five kilometres from the Lebanese-Syrian border in the eastern Bekaa Valley.

A Hizbollah guerrilla was killed and four wounded in the air assault, the 50th into Lebanon this year, Hizbollah sources said.

A day earlier Israeli warplanes hit a PFLP-GC base south of Beirut. No one was injured in that attack, the Palestinian group said.

Mr. Bouez also accused Palestinian President Yasser Arafat of assisting Mr. Netanyahu in inflaming the situation in south Lebanon. Al Quds Press, based in Nicosia, reported that the bombers who killed 13 people and themselves in a Jerusalem market last month came from the Ain Al Hilweh Lebanese camps, and Mr. Arafat announced Friday that Israel had told him the two came from



Lebanese women cry Friday at the funeral of a woman who was killed along with her two children in the explosion of a roadside bomb in the village of Marqaba in southern Lebanon on Thursday (AFP photo)

abroad.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai insisted Saturday that Israel wanted to keep a lid on the violence, just hours before U.S. envoy Dennis Ross was due in the region on a peace mission.

"Our goal is not to provoke a deterioration, but a stabilisation of the situation in order to guarantee calm and security for the areas in

the north of the country," he said.

Israeli Radio said the army decided not to launch a massive reprisal operation in Lebanon, but would continue to attack "terrorist concentrations" there.

The U.S. State Department on Friday urged all sides in south Lebanon including Syria to show "maximum restraint" after

the rocket attacks.

"We've been in contact with all the parties directly to urge maximum restraint," State Department spokesman James Rubin said.

Some 360,000 Palestinian refugees live in 12 camps across Lebanon, many belonging to anti-Arafat factions opposed to the current peace accords with Israel.

Palestinian council calls for creation of 'national service'

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Palestinian legislators called Saturday for the creation of a "national service" to bolster security and the defence of the self-rule territories.

The Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) voted unanimously for the motion and asked its legal committee to draft legislation on the service, which would have to be approved by President Yasser Arafat, PLC member Hazni Shuaibi told Agence France Presse.

Young Palestinian men and women would be required to do national service

after they complete their studies for a period of six months to a year, he said.

"Young people could also support security forces and train to participate in the defence of the Palestinian territories," Mr. Shuaibi said.

Mr. Arafat commands several thousand police officers as part of Palestinian security forces but no military service has yet been set up in the self-rule areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The call for the creation of "national service" comes at time of heightened tensions

between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority following twin suicide bombings in Jerusalem last month which killed 15 people.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has slapped crippling sanctions on the Palestinian territories, including a strict closure and threats to forcefully enter self-rule areas to arrest suspected terrorists.

Mr. Arafat warned that such a move would be an act of war and amended a exercise this week of Palestinian security forces training to counter any Israeli incursion.

Israel eases blockade of W. Bank towns hours before Ross arrival

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel announced Saturday that it will further ease its blockade of Palestinian towns on the West Bank only hours ahead of the scheduled arrival here of U.S. peace envoy Dennis Ross.

The military blockade on the northern West Bank towns of Jenin, Tulkarem and Qalqilya will be lifted as of 4 a.m. Sunday, the Israeli army said, allowing Palestinians in those communities to travel to other self-rule areas.

This follows Israel's lifting on Friday of its blockade on the West Bank towns of Jericho and Nablus, as well as reopening border crossings into Jordan and Egypt.

But Israel has maintained harsh restrictions imposed on other Palestinian areas after last week's Jerusalem

bombing. The latest measures came as Mr. Ross was due in Israel late Saturday in a bid to prevent the complete collapse of the peace process between the Palestinians and Israelis.

Mr. Ross is to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at 8 a.m. on Sunday, followed by talks with Palestinian leaders, officials said.

Israel also began Friday allowing Palestinians to move through the Rafah crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, a Palestinian security official said.

Israel had earlier softened its total closure of Rafah to allow Palestinians residing abroad to move through it, but since Friday morning Gaza residents were also permitted once more to cross, the official said.

A Jordanian official said, however, on Saturday that the Allenby bridge, which links Jordan and the West Bank, is still closed off by Israel to Palestinians wanting to enter the self-rule areas.

On Friday, an Israeli army spokeswoman said that the bridge had been reopened to pedestrians subject to "tight security checks" following its closure after July 30 suicide bombings in Jerusalem that killed 15 people.

"Allenby Bridge is still closed to people wanting to enter the autonomous Palestinian territories except tourists and those holding Jerusalem identity cards issued by Israel," a senior Jordanian security source was quoted by Jordan's official Petra News Agency as saying.

Ross comes to Mideast amidst dispute over mission purpose

TEL AVIV (AFP) — U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross was due here late Saturday in an attempt to salvage the crisis-hit peace process, but Israel and the Palestinians were at odds over the main focus of his visit.

Israel said that Mr. Ross would concentrate solely on pushing the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to dismantle Islamist groups after the July 30 suicide bombing in Jerusalem that left 15 dead.

But the Palestinians, groaning under the weight of crushing Israeli sanctions imposed after the bombing, insisted the U.S. troubleshooter address the whole of the autonomy accords and Israel's punitive measures.

Mr. Ross is to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu 8:00 o'clock Sunday morning before travelling to the West Bank town of Ramallah for talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

His visit, originally planned for a week ago, was put off after the double bombing of a Jerusalem market which Israel has blamed on Islamist militants in the Palestinian territories.

Before his arrival, Uzi Arad, Mr. Netanyahu's policy advisor, said, "Mr. Ross's mandate is limited to security issues and ways to convince the Palestinian [National] Authority that it must respect its commitments to fight against terrorists."

"The resolution of security issues is a prior condition of any resumption of negotiations with the Palestinians," he said.

The U.S. State Department



Palestinian President Yasser Arafat points his finger during an interview with Reuters and CNN Saturday just hours before the arrival of U.S. special envoy Dennis Ross. He was saying: "Our people will not kneel" (Reuters photo)

ment also said its envoy would "exclusively focus on security cooperation."

"If [the Palestinians] don't go about cooperating in the area of security, if they don't provide 100 per cent effort, they will not be doing their share of the bargain that is implicit" in the Oslo autonomy accords, State Department spokesman James Rubin said.

However, Palestinian officials said Mr. Ross should also look at Israel's side of the bargain in the autonomy accords.

"The question of security is [just] one of the elements

on autonomy that must be taken into consideration," Mr. Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani said.

The Palestinians also want the U.S. to pressure Israel into lifting its punishing sanctions on the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a first step towards resuming peace talks.

The Palestinian position which will be expressed to Mr. Ross is that a lifting of the blockade must precede any other negotiations," Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo said.

Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza Strip, block-

aded Palestinian-ruled towns on the West Bank and froze tax repayments owed to the cash-strapped PNA after the Jerusalem bombing.

Mr. Arafat slammed the sanctions as Israeli "state terrorism" at a meeting of the Palestinian Legislative Council in Ramallah on Saturday.

And while he said he was willing to agree to security cooperation with Israel, "we cannot accept the Israeli government's idea of making me a new General Lahad," he added, in a reference to Antoine Lahad, the leader of the Israeli-allied south Lebanon Army militia.

The U.S. has described Israel's sanctions against the Palestinians as counterproductive.

"We have said that we regard the closure that harms the Palestinian people themselves as unwise," State Department

spokesman Rubin said.

Mr. Rubin added that the Israelis "have said that they will look at ways to ease that closure as the Palestinians improve their security cooperation."

But Mr. Netanyahu's advisor Mr. Arad said that "for the moment, Ross will not make any demands of Israel."

Israel says that Hamas or Islamic Jihad were responsible for the July 30 attack although investigators have yet to identify the bombers.

Mr. Arafat has repeatedly insisted that the bombers came from abroad, but Israeli officials rejected his claim Saturday saying he was trying to get out of his security commitments.

"Yasser Arafat has the greatest interest in claiming that the terrorists came from abroad, to try to play down the Palestinian [National] Authority's responsibility for the bombing," Mr. Arad told Israeli Radio.

Arafat accuses Israel of state terrorism, says cannot become another Lahad

PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT Yasser Arafat Saturday accused Israel of "state terrorism" over the crippling sanctions slapped on the Palestinian territories after the Jerusalem suicide bombing. "The blockade imposed by Israel on the Palestinian territories constitutes state terrorism," Mr. Arafat told a meeting of the Palestinian Legislative Council in the West Bank town of Ramallah. Israel restricted the movement of Palestinian people and goods and halted transfers of funds to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) after the July 30 suicide bombing at a crowded Jerusalem market that killed 13 civilians. "But we cannot accept the Israeli government's idea of making me a new General Lahad," Mr. Arafat said in reference to Antoine Lahad, the leader of the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia. "We don't want just bilateral cooperation but would like the presence of other parties," he said, adding that the United States and Europe could be part of a security committee which would be able to "witness our goodwill."

31 killed in Turk-Kurd fighting

ANKARA (AFP) — Thirty-one people have been killed in clashes between security forces and Kurdish separatist rebels in southeast Turkey, government officials said Saturday.

Army troops killed 23 members of the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) in fighting in a rugged area in the province of Sirnak bordering Iraq, the southeast's regional governor's office said.

It did not say when the fighting took place or if there were casualties on the government side.

The Turkish army, which entered northern Iraq in May and stayed there for five weeks in an operation to wipe out PKK bases, earlier this week launched a large-scale military campaign against the rebels on the Turkish side of the border.

Earlier on Saturday, the Anatolian news agency quoted local officials as saying four PKK members and three pro-government Kurdish guards were killed in a clash late Friday near the southeastern town of Hakkari where the Turkish,

Iraqi and Iranian borders converge.

One policeman was killed and two others were injured near Hakkari Saturday when their armoured vehicle hit a mine believed to be placed by the PKK, the officials said.

More than 25,000 people, including rebels, members of the security forces and civilians, have been killed in violence in the southeast of the country since 1984 when the PKK launched its armed campaign for a Kurdish homeland.



ROVER MAKES TRACKS: This colour image of the Sojourner Rover was taken on planet Mars at the end of the day on Sol 30, Friday. The Rover is perched on top of Mermaid Dune, a dark material distinct from the surrounding bright surface. Dark red Rover tracks extend from the foreground to the base of the Rover's wheels (Reuters photo)



SHOW OF TOY MUSCLE: Palestinian scouts holding toy guns march in the centre of Nablus in the West Bank Saturday to protest against the maintained harsh sanctions imposed on Palestinians since last week following a double suicide bombing in Jerusalem that killed 15 people (see stories on page 1) (AFP photo)

Iraq gives overtures for better relations with Iran — papers

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi government newspapers urged Iran Saturday to respond to an overture from President Saddam Hussein for improved ties between the two neighbours.

"Iraq is ready to turn a new page with Iran if it resolves the issue of prisoners of war and respects the Arabs," wrote the daily Babel, run by President Saddam's eldest son Uday.

In a speech to mark the ninth anniversary of the end of the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, President Saddam called on new Iranian President Mohammad Khatami to live up to his promise of improved foreign relations by mending fences with Iraq.

Babel said: "We are waiting" for a response from Tehran.

The official daily Al Jumhuriyah also urged Iran to "open a new era of cooperation with Iraq in the interests of the region."

Iraq and Iran have yet to sign a peace treaty, a full nine years since an August 1988 ceasefire brokered by the U.N. that ended their eight-year war.

Ties are still strained by the issue of prisoners of war and missing persons from the conflict as well as Iraqi planes sent for shelter in Iran during the 1991 Gulf war.

Iraq says it sent 115 warplanes and 33 other aircraft to Iran to escape allied bombing raids, but Tehran says it has only 22 Iraqi planes and is yet to return them.

"The non-return of these planes would be strategic error by Iran," Al Jumhuriyah warned.

Iraq also accuses Iran of still holding 20,000 prisoners of war. Iran, for its part, complains that there are still 5,000 Iranian POWs in Iraq and has given no figures for Iraqis in its jails.

Saddam is a 'dictator' says Iranian newspaper

TEHRAN (AFP) — An Iranian newspaper close to the government on Saturday described Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as a "dictator" and rejected his call for Tehran to improve relations with Baghdad.

"Observers in Iran are surprised to see such a declaration by a dictator who ignores even the most rudimentary international norms," Iran News said.

President Saddam called on Iran's new President Mohammad Khatami to prove Tehran's desire to improve its relations with Baghdad with "concrete action."

In a televised address to mark the anniversary of the end of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, President Saddam called on Tehran to exchange its policy of "expansion, interference and deceit" with one of "cooperation" with Iraq.

"We are not content to hear from present Iranian officials words without deeds," President Saddam said, promising reciprocal Iraqi action to any Iranian gesture.

Mr. Khatami said after being sworn in on Monday that he wanted a "detente" in Iran's relations with foreign countries. Iran and Iraq have yet to sign a peace treaty, a full nine years since an August 1988 ceasefire brokered by the U.N. that ended their eight-year war.

Iran news said relations between the two countries were at a standstill because of the issue of prisoners of war from the conflict and Baghdad's support for Iran's main armed opposition group, the People's Mujahideen.

Islamists' spiritual leader backs call for end to violence in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — The spiritual leader of Egypt's main armed Islamist group has voiced support for a call by six key militants to end the Islamic violence that erupted in Egypt in 1992. Al Hayat newspaper reported Saturday.

Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, who is serving a life sentence in a U.S. jail for his role in a terrorist plot against the U.S., said he "supports the call made by the young for an end to the violence," Al Hayat said.

"We must meet this request," Al Hayat said, quoting from a statement which it said was signed by the spiritual guide of

Egypt's Jamaa Islamiyah group.

The cleric's U.S. lawyer, Ramsey Clarke, confirmed the statement to Al Hayat and said Abdul Rahman had asked him to tell the media on his behalf, "I bless the call for a stop to violence and ask others to back this call."

At the start of a trial on July 5 of 97 militants accused of murder and other offences, six founding members of the Jamaa Islamiyah called for a halt to the Islamist violence.

"We were waiting for Sheikh Omar's opinion. If this is his opinion then it is good. It will help give a

push to the initiative [to stop the violence]," the cleric's lawyer in Egypt, Munasser Al Zayat, told Agence France Presse Saturday.

"He spoke to his sons a few days ago and told them that soon he would give an opinion," he said.

After the July 5 announcement, Mr. Al Zayat said the call was made because the militants "want their country to be ready for its main battle against Israel."

But the leaders abroad of Jamaa Islamiyah and the Jihad, another Egyptian Islamist group, said they would continue their struggle,

describing the call to end violence as a "plot against the Islamic current."

The hardline Egyptian group Jihad Tala'a Al Fatah (vanguard of the conquest) also refused to lay down their arms.

"The holy war being waged by Muslims against tyranny and evil-doers cannot be halted because of an appeal, whoever made it," the group said in the August issue of its Arabic language news bulletin received in London.

More than 1,200 people have been killed in the violent campaign by Islamists to overthrow Egypt's secular government.

Syrian press praises Albright on remarks over land-for-peace

'Remarks bring back to mind the real essence of peace and its bases'

DAMASCUS (R) — Syrian newspapers Saturday praised U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's remarks that Middle East peace should be based on land-for-peace and urged Washington to play the role of the honest broker.

Official newspapers, ahead of a visit by peace envoy Dennis Ross, said Washington should pressure Israel to hand back occupied Arab lands to revive the battered peace process.

"[The remarks] are a step in the right way," the official daily Al Thawra said.

"Mrs. Albright's remarks are important because they bring back to mind the real essence of peace and its bases, and at the same time they confirm the U.S. commitment to just and comprehensive peace."

Ms. Albright said on Wednesday, "we seek a just and lasting peace achieved through direct negotiations, based on U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, including the principle on which every Arab-Israeli agreement has been built: land-for-peace."

Sporadic Syrian-Israeli peace talks ground to a halt when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, elected in 1996, rejected withdrawal from the Golan Heights, captured from Syria in 1967. Syria demands full withdrawal.

The U.S. sponsored Arab-Israeli peace talks opened in Madrid in 1991, based on the land-

for-peace principle.

Mr. Ross is due to arrive in the region Saturday to diffuse tension after Israel reacted to a twin bombing in Jerusalem by sealing the West Bank and Gaza and freezing financial transactions.

The English language daily Syria Times said Syria wants an agreement ensuring the return of the Golan Heights, adding that a U.S. decision was required to solve the Middle East crisis.

"A clear decision is needed now to break the spiral ill-will of the Israeli government," it said.

"Syria asks for a full and comprehensive agreement that could not be subject to future negotiations," it said.

The official newspapers also condemned Israel's attacks on Lebanon, calling on Arabs and the international society to show solidarity with Lebanon. "It is time that efforts were met to save south Lebanon from Israel's aggressions," the Tishreen daily said.

"Solidarity campaigns should be translated into action to tighten the isolation of Israel and hold it responsible for the escalation and deterioration of the situation."

"As long as Israel dismisses all calls to stop its aggressive and provocative practices, then it is the right and the duty of the Lebanese people to continue resisting occupation," it said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

King visits armed forces in the south

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein, the supreme commander of the armed forces, on Saturday inspected several Jordanian Armed Forces units in the southern region. King Hussein was briefed on the duties and the military drills of these units.

Inmate killed in Turkish prison riot

ANKARA (AFP) — One prisoner was killed Saturday as security forces put down a riot in a southern Turkish jail in which five wardens had been taken hostage by inmates. The Anatolian News Agency (ANA) reported. Fighting broke out between inmates and wardens in the top security jail in Adana, 400 kilometres south of Ankara, late Friday, the ANA said. It was not known why the trouble started. One prisoner was killed as military police intervened and rescued the wardens. Another warden was injured. No other details were immediately available. Five prisoners were killed and five were injured in another riot in an Istanbul jail on July 9.

24 Iranians arrested trying to sneak into Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwaiti coastguards have arrested 24 Iranians caught trying to infiltrate into the Gulf emirate, the interior ministry said Saturday. Kuwait, which has not yet fixed its maritime border with Iran, regularly catches Iranians trying to get into the oil-rich country on board small boats.

3 Filipinos jailed, to be expelled for illicit affair

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A Filipino and two compatriot women have been jailed for three months in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for having an illicit affair and will be deported, Al Khaleej newspaper reported Saturday. Police in the northern emirate of Fujairah in the Gulf of Oman arrested the three in a raid at the Filipino's farmhouse, the paper said. "Police ambushed the two Filipinas as they went into the house of the man of the same nationality. They were sentenced to three months in prison and would be deported after they were convicted of an illicit relationship." The newspaper did not identify the three or give further details about the incident. Nearly 90,000 expatriates from the Philippines work in the oil-rich UAE, mostly as housemaids and construction labourers.

Floods kill seven in eastern Turkey

ANKARA (AFP) — Floods killed seven people and injured scores of others late Friday in an eastern Turkish province bordering Armenia, a private television station reported Saturday. The floods hit three townships in the province of Agri, damaging more than 100 homes, NTV said. This was the worst natural disaster to affect the region in decades, it said.

Iranian girls attacked by acid to appeal against court verdict

TEHRAN (AFP) — Two Iranian sisters injured in an acid attack are to appeal against a court verdict condemning their attacker to the same fate because they want a harsher punishment, a newspaper said Saturday.

The court had ruled that Faezeh, 17, and her 10-year-old sister could hurl acid in the hired hitman's

face under the Islamic Law of Talion which allows victims or their families to exact the same punishment as the crime.

But the family is furious that the man who ordered the acid attack which completely disfigured the girls and burned parts of their bodies, Hamid Khoshnevis, was only jailed for 15 years, the government

newspaper Iran said.

Mr. Khoshnevis paid Hitman Mahmoud Jafari \$2,000 to carry out the attack in February after the family refused to let him marry the eldest girl.

"The man who ordered this horrific crime should also be severely punished," Faezeh said, quoted by the newspaper.

"I will have revenge and

do the same thing to Hamid Khoshnevis," she said. A third man was sentenced to three years in jail and 10 years exile near the Iranian-Pakistani border for driving a getaway vehicle after the attack in a Tehran street.

The two girls have undergone several operations to their face and body since the attack.

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16:00American Chart Show
18:00French Programmes
19:00News in French
19:30News Headline
19:35Fresh Prince-of-Belair
20:00Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
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21:10Renegade
22:00News in English
22:30One West Waikiki
23:15Sisters

PRAYER TIMES

04:25Fajr
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Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10Cartoons
15:00Energy Express
16:00American Chart Show
18:00French Programmes
19:00News in French
19:30News Headline
19:35Fresh Prince-of-Belair
20:00Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
20:30National Geographic
21:10Renegade
22:00News in English
22:30One West Waikiki
23:15Sisters

PRAYER TIMES

04:25Fajr
05:51(Sunrise) Doha
12:41Dhuhr
16:21Asr
19:31Maghreb
20:56Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweidieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
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Cabinet briefings

The Prime Minister's Office today held a series of briefings for the media on the new government's policies and programmes.

The briefings were held in the presence of the Prime Minister, Mr. Rana Husseini, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Nassef Haddad.

The Prime Minister outlined the government's commitment to the principles of democracy, justice, and economic development.

He also announced the formation of a new cabinet, which would be sworn in on Monday.

The Deputy Prime Minister outlined the government's policies on education, health, and social welfare.

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Police ap

The Jordanian Police today announced that they had arrested a number of suspects in connection with a recent series of bombings in Amman.

The police said that the suspects were members of a terrorist group and were planning to carry out further attacks.

The police also announced that they had recovered a number of weapons and explosives from the suspects.

The police said that they were continuing their investigation and would announce further details as they became available.

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Cabinet briefed on new visa measures at border posts

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet was Saturday briefed on new measures adopted at border posts to facilitate tourist entry into the Kingdom, including the issuance of visas and other customs procedures.

Minister of Finance, Saleem Hafez, told the regular Cabinet session, chaired by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, that visitors receiving visas upon entry are no longer to be issued a receipt for visa fees, but rather stamps will be affixed to passports testifying to fees paid.

According to Mr. Hafez, procedures at the free trade zones are still causing difficulties for investors, however, work is underway to redress any such obstacles.

The Cabinet approved a memorandum signed by Jordan and Japan stipulating Japanese aid to the Kingdom in the form of fertil-



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali

ers and farm machinery valued at \$2.1 million. This aid is to be channelled through the Ministry of Agriculture and is aimed at helping Jordan increase

its food output.

The Cabinet authorised Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha to sign the memoranda on behalf of the Jordanian government.

The Council of Ministers endorsed a general draft agreement, signed by Jordan and the European Investment Bank, providing guidelines for technical and financial cooperation.

The Cabinet authorised Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf to sign the agreement.

The Council of Ministers approved the publication of Al Nahda magazine to represent the National Constitutional Party.

It also formed Jordan's delegation to attend an international ministerial seminar on postal services to be held in Geneva this October.

Prince Hassan reiterates importance of containing crisis facing the peace talks

By Ghaila Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — HRH Crown Prince Hassan Saturday stressed the importance of containing the crisis facing the peace process so that progress can be made towards achieving a comprehensive peace capable of guaranteeing the rights of Palestinians and other peoples of the region.

The Crown Prince described the turning point at which the peace talks currently stand as leading to a comprehensive assessment of the situation in order to stimulate future talks.

"We will not be able to proceed to the discussion of basic issues — such as Jerusalem, refugees, and borders — unless we contain the current crisis and prevent those who would limit the peace process to a narrow definition of security from achieving their goal," Prince Hassan told Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Prince Hassan said that humanising the peace talks and addressing essential life-giving issues does not mean that the political aspect of the process will be ignored.

However, he added, addressing humanitarian issues would create a political environment conducive to the treatment of the political dimension.

Speaking to reporters after a visit to the Prime Ministry, the Prince detailed the security dimension as only part of the peace process, reiterating Jordan's unequivocal belief that there can be no security without peace just as there can be no peace without security.

"I reiterate that there is no peace without security and no security without peace," the Crown Prince



said.

Prince Hassan praised Egypt's role, noting that Jordan and Egypt share the same stand on the crisis facing the peace process.

In response to a question, the Prince affirmed that His Majesty King Hussein stresses the importance of the American role in overcoming the current stalemate and approaching the situation in a way which would reflect the needs of the people of the region.

"We should turn the situation around and focus on political issues, security

issues and vital interests," he said.

Prince Hassan expressed his satisfaction with the reopening of bridges and passages as well as the consideration given to the movement of food and medicine.

The Prince expressed hope that the visit of the U.S. Special Envoy Dennis Ross to the region would yield positive results in pushing the peace process forward.

Prince Hassan said his visit to the Prime Ministry aimed at discussing the latest developments in the region with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

Regarding local issues, the Prince praised the comprehensive methods and sectoral coordination undertaken by the government geared towards serving citizen interests.

Prince Hassan also attended part of the Saturday Cabinet meeting which tackled governance issues, the municipalities as well as the government's commitment to prepare a topographic map of Jordan until the year 2020.

He also stressed the importance of the legal and institutional commitment to safeguard the requirements of environmental, industrial, health and agricultural sectors.

Police apprehend arson suspect

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Police have apprehended a 50-year-old individual who Saturday morning attempted to set fire to the cafeteria of a weekly tabloid, official sources said.

According to one source, the man, identified as Mohammad M., entered Shihun weekly newspaper's cafeteria carrying a gallon of kerosene, poured some of the flammable liquid on few chairs and ignited the same.

The suspect was immediately overpowered by a police patrol unit which had been cruising the neighbourhood, while cafeteria employees brought the fire under control, the official said.

No one was injured in the incident. Police are questioning Mohammad M. as regards to his motive for the attack, according to the official.

According to one newspaper

reporter, Mohammad M. visited Shihun last week, alleging that a man "of importance" had set fire to his Ajloun house.

In the Aug. 9 issue of Shihun, Mohammad M. was cited as stating that he had inherited a piece of land from his father.

He was subsequently "surprised to learn that the land was registered [under the name of this] influential person," according to the interview.

Mohammad M. asserted that he initiated litigation and recovered his land, "which angered this influential person, and prompted him to set fire to my house."

He maintained that he was sitting in the backyard of his house, and was suddenly surrounded by smoke and flames.

According to Mohammad M., his wife, mother and children, received minor burns as a result of the incident.

"How strange that this man would come to relate such a story, and then, upon its publication, become upset and want to set fire to the newspaper," the reporter stated. "It is possible that [Mohammad M.] did not like the portrayal of his dilemma in the article."

In November of 1994, four people, carrying several Molotov cocktails, attacked the same newspaper's premises, throwing a brick at the head of a guard. None of the Molotov cocktails were used in the attack.

Subsequent to being struck with the brick, the said guard reached for his gun and fired several shots in the air, at which time the intruders fled.

In other incidents in the Kingdom, CDD officials reported the Friday rescue of a goat from a cesspool in Irbid.

The goat, belonging to Daham Thulaj, was rescued without injury subsequent to a 30-minute rescue operation.

Suspected killer referred to Criminal Court

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Criminal Prosecutor Zuhair Atiyat will refer the case of a 40-year-old man, who last May shot and killed his wife and four of his children in Karak for trial.

Awad M. reportedly opened fire on his family shortly after midnight on May 13, killing his 35-year-old wife Samar Salah, and his children Ahmad, seven, Basma, six, Sahar, one, and Ibrahim, four months.

"The case was recently transferred from the Karak criminal prosecutor to Mr. Atiyat, who is questioning the suspect and preparing the charge sheet in

order to transfer the case to the court," an official source said.

Official sources quoted Mr. M., who turned himself in to police shortly after the incident, as claiming that "he killed his wife and children to cleanse his honour."

The sources cited the suspect as claiming that a man knocked at his door late at night and that when he opened the door the man fled.

They added that Mr. M. suspected "the stranger as having a relationship with his wife and suspected that the children were not his."

Relatives of the accused, however, stated that Mr. M. held serious debts and that he shot his family for finan-

cial reasons.

A forensic examination performed on the four children indicated that each child was shot in the head at close range.

Further, the medical reports indicated that the mother died of a sole bullet wound to the chest.

Two of the suspect's children escaped the shooting spree with minor injuries.

Officials said Awad, a service taxi driver in Aqaba, had two additional children from a previous marriage.

The two children were on a visit to their mother in the Jordan Valley at the time of the incident.

Despite financial constraints, the Fuheis Festival fêtes history, culture

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Facilitating the Fuheis Festival admittance process through better organisation while dividing and redesigning the central theatre, were the main concerns of the festival's administration this year, according to Festival Director Ayman Samawi.

"Limiting admittance to families, organising entrances to facilitate crowd movement and dividing the main theatre to ameliorate spectator views were also necessary modifications," Mr. Samawi explained.

This year the city will represent Jerusalem, Festival Secretary Issa Salman affirmed.

The city corner is decorated with doors of Jerusalem, he added.

The city corner exhibits a specific city every year to educate visitors as regards the history of Arab nations and cultures.

The corner will also boast an exhibition of slides with

pictures of the holy city, merchants selling souvenirs and art shows reproducing old traditions and culture, Mr. Salman explained.

Fuheis' eighth annual festival, under the theme "Jordan, its History and Civilization" is to be held between August 14-21 under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan, Mr. Samawi explained.

The festival will include poetry recitals and cultural activities, he added.

There will also convene a special gathering to honour the individuals who help care for underprivileged children in Jordan, as part of the festival activities, Mr. Salman said.

A lecture about the Jordanian press and information revolution in the Kingdom, to be attended by intellectuals, is also scheduled, he explained.

There will be a corner for creative musical works, an environmental agricultural exhibition, sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as a tourist exhibition,

sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism, and a one-day festival devoted to children who will be admitted at no charge, he confirmed.

The lack of financial resources is the major difficulty which the festival faces every year, Mr. Samawi asserted.

As an example he pointed to the Fuheis Band of Culture, established 12 years ago.

There are, he lamented, financial obstacles which deprive the band, with a total of 30 members, from continuing their progress academically and artistically.

Many members travel or marry and quit the band, he added. Therefore any chance of continuity without financial support is slim.

Last year, the band received a mere JD 380 of financial support from the Ministry of Culture, according to Mr. Salman.

Today the band has less than JD 25 in its coffers, a figure which impedes its chances of producing cre-

ative, artistic material, Mr. Samawi added.

The band often travels to the Jordanian desert, as well as other locations in the Kingdom, to compose new artistic material derived from the country's actual heritage, Mr. Salman stated.

However, these trips are no longer feasible due to the immense expenditures which they cannot accommodate, he added.

The band's participation has been deemed essential in the Fuheis Festival, however Mr. Samawi could offer no guarantees of its participation next year due to its current financial straits.

Festival organisers and the Fuheis youth club will attempt to convene a conference to discuss major topics concerning the festival, Mr. Samawi affirmed.

The conference is slated to include the Fuheis Youth Club as well as representatives of both the Fuheis and the Greater Amman Municipalities.

Travel agents present requests to ministry, RJ

AQABA (Petra) — Heads of

tourist and travel agencies in southern Jordan Saturday presented a list of requests to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities as well as Royal Jordanian (RJ) airlines.

These were related to work difficulties which, they claimed, are weakening the tourism industry.

Spokesperson Ahmad Taha Kabarti, who presented the list at a meeting here, attended by local government officials and representatives of private sector travel agencies, outlined the major obstacles facing these agencies.

While difficulties facing the tourist industry as a whole were covered, emphasis was placed on resolving those of the Aqaba tourism industry.

Mr. Kabarti requested the reduction of tariffs on water and electricity in Aqaba, a commission increase for agencies which sell tickets for ferry boats between Egyptian ports and Aqaba, a reduction in the cost of tourist services at hotels as well as the reduction of travel fares on Royal Jordanian flights.

The above steps, he said, would encourage tourists to visit Jordan's southern

regions.

President of the Jordan Travel Agents Association (JTAA) Lam' Haddadin detailed the association's encouragement of the media attracting visitors to archaeological and tourist sites.

Aqaba Mayor Riad Helu bemoaned a lack of essential services for persons visiting the southern beaches of Aqaba.

However, he confirmed that the municipality is securing such services in conjunction with the Aqaba Regional Authority (ARA).

According to Mr. Helu, the municipality has approached the authority for a plot of southern coast land in order to construct a scout camp with necessary utilities to attract Jordanian tourists.

Meeting participants decided to develop a follow-up committee to minimise any difficulties facing travel and tourist agencies in the south of Jordan.

According to Mr. Haddadin, the JTAA is planning to organise a national conference on tourism for marketing Jordan at home and abroad.

The meeting was organised by the association.

ICARDA organising agricultural conference

AMMAN (J.T.) — The

International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) is organising a five-day international conference here, to begin Sept. 2, on agricultural growth, resource sustainability, and redressing poverty in areas with little rainfall in West Asia and North Africa.

ICARDA Regional Programme Coordinator Nasir Haddad maintained that participants will discuss four main topics and are expected to approve recommendations designed to help the region increase food production and protect the environment.

According to Mr. Haddad, the first topic covers policies to liberalise markets, the transfer of modern technology and achieving balanced socio-economic development.

The second topic focuses on strategies for drought management and as such participants will review programmes enacted by countries with experience in this field, in addition to discerning farmers' needs in drought-stricken areas as well as types of farming suitable for semi-arid and dry regions.

The third topic is concerned with pasture lands and their

development while the fourth topic will detail the role of modern technology in boosting food output in dry areas.

The meeting is to be held under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan and attended by a large number of researchers, agricultural policy makers, and representatives of a number of regional and international organisations, according to Dr. Haddad.

Established in 1977, ICARDA is governed by an independent board of trustees and seeks to enhance and sustain food production while improving socio-economic conditions through strengthening national research systems in developing nations.

Based in Syria, ICARDA is one of 18 centres supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research — an international group of donor agency representatives, eminent scientists and institutional administrators from developed and developing countries who guide and support its work.

The conference is organised in cooperation with the German Agency for Technical Development and the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr. Haddad stated.

WHAT'S GOING ON

JERASH FESTIVAL

* Musical performance by the Musical Ensembles of the National Music Conservatory at the North Theatre at 8:30 p.m.

* Concert by Lebanese artist Nawal Al Zu'bi at the South Theatre at 8:30 p.m.

* Jordanian play "Fairhood son of Robin Hood" at Argem's Steps at 8:30 p.m.

* Musical performance by Philadelphia University band at the Sound and Light Theatre at 8:30 p.m.

* Egyptian play entitled "Don't Shut the Curtain" (to be followed by musical performances by Ali Tantawi and Khalid Youssef) at Grace Theatre at 8:00 p.m.

* Musical performances by Jordanian band and an Egyptian circus show at the main square at 7:00 p.m.

* Display of handicrafts and sculptures at Zeus Vault.

CONCERT

* Musical performance by The Family International at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

LECTURE

* The Financial Policies in Jordan by the minister of finance at the Royal Cultural Centre at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITION

* Photography exhibition by Claudia Pedotti at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre/Artisana, Jabel Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 647858) until Aug. 16

Holbrooke and Milosevic resume Bosnia face-off

BELGRADE (R) — U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke renewed his carrot and stick Balkan diplomacy Saturday, urging Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to live up to his commitments under the 1995 Dayton Peace Treaty.

Serbian state television showed footage of the start of a second round of talks between the two men with Momcilo Krajisnik, the Serb member of the Bosnian presidency, also in attendance.

Mr. Krajisnik is the most powerful man in the Bosnian Serb Republic after Radovan Karadzic, the former Bosnian Serb president and indicted war criminal. His attendance showed that Bosnia and Mr. Karadzic figured high on the agenda.

"The discussions (with Mr. Milosevic) were intense as always," Mr. Holbrooke told reporters as he entered his hotel after Friday night's first round.

"It would not be fair to disclose anything at this time," added Mr. Holbrooke, architect of the Dayton treaty which ended the wars in Bosnia and Croatia.

Mr. Holbrooke and Mr. Milosevic, both adroit and ruthless players in peace diplomacy, matched wits for 3-1/2 hours before agreeing to an unscheduled extension of their talks Saturday morning.

The envoy and his staff had little sleep during the night, a U.S. official said.

One diplomat described the meeting as "the first round of a slugging match."

Belgrade analysts said the fact that the talks were to be continued Saturday raised expectations of results and showed how high the stakes were, both for the fate of the peace accords and Yugoslavia's future.

But diplomats and Serbian officials familiar with Friday night's parley were cautious about the outcome.

"The price of compliance (with the Dayton accords) is very high," a senior Yugoslav source warned.

"I did not see anyone coming any closer (to agreement). We were nibbling away but no one ate well," he said of the talks, which took place over dinner in Mr. Milosevic's White Court Palace.

Diplomats expected Mr. Holbrooke threatened Mr. Milosevic with renewed economic sanctions unless he abided by his Dayton commitments, which include handing over his former proteges Mr. Karadzic and others wanted by the U.N. War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague.

Under a deal Mr. Holbrooke brokered a year ago, Mr. Karadzic should have stepped down and left politics.

But he has not, and still rules with an iron fist the Serb-controlled half of Bosnia, persistently circumventing the accords and undermining his successor as Bosnian Serb President, Biljana Plavsic.

Mr. Milosevic's choice is stark. Handing over Mr. Karadzic, revered by some 600,000 Serb refugees from Bosnia and Croatia, could be politically very damaging to him at home.

But his moribund economy cannot continue without a life-saving infusion of fresh capital for much longer and feed its 11 million people, of whom already one third are poor and another 600,000 starving.

"It pains us to see this happening — we don't want to do it (impose new sanctions)," the current U.S. envoy for former Yugoslavia, Robert Gelbard, said. He stressed the United States had "enormous sympathy" for the people of Yugoslavia.

"Holbrooke is bringing a bagful of carrots and sticks. It's up to Milosevic to choose which he would rather have," one diplomat said.

Mr. Milosevic also faced tough questioning about Serbia's handling of human rights in its mostly-Albanian populated province of Kosovo, freedom of the media in Serbia and the slow pace of democratic and economic reforms.

And Mr. Holbrooke is not giving him any maneuvering space. He ruled out a proposal from Mr. Karadzic that he be tried within Bosnia under international supervision.

Calling Mr. Karadzic's proposal "bizarre and totally unacceptable," Mr. Holbrooke told CNN the former

Bosnian Serb leader could expect no special deals.

"That is out of the question. He has got to be brought to justice," Mr. Holbrooke said in an interview from Belgrade.

Mr. Holbrooke flew into Belgrade Friday fresh from having resolved a row between Bosnia's ethnic leaders over diplomatic posts which had triggered a punitive international cut-off of contacts with Bosnian ambassadors.

Under the deal, a Muslim will be the Bosnian ambassador to the United Nations, a Serb will be ambassador to Washington and a Croat will be envoy to Japan, according to Mr. Holbrooke.

Mr. Holbrooke had come out of self-imposed "retirement" from the diplomatic service for the second time in a year to salvage key aspects of the peace treaty he engineered.

Members of Bosnia's multi-ethnic collective presidency also agreed on the composition of a joint military commission and on a single area code for Bosnia's telephone network to support a reintegration of the country envisaged by the peace pact.

"These agreements are full evidence of Western determination (to enforce the peace agreement)," Mr. Holbrooke told reporters after the agreement reached in Sarajevo. "These are steps forward, and pretty solid ones."



Diana Princess of Wales is surrounded by children in the Bosnian town of Tuzla, Friday. Princess Diana is on a private visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina to highlight the plight of victims of landmines (Reuters photo)

Diana brings good news for Bosnian mine victim

TUZLA (R) — Britain's Princess Diana brought good news to a landmine victim Saturday as she toured Bosnia to highlight the danger of the weapons left over from war.

Princess Diana told Mohammed Soljankic on his 38th birthday that he would be receiving two artificial feet thanks to money raised by donations for Bosnians injured by mines.

Mr. Soljankic was wounded in a mine blast as a soldier at the beginning of the Bosnian War in 1992 and his disability has prevented him from finding work in peacetime, aid workers said.

The princess, dressed in a white shirt, denim jeans and tan shoes, smiled for cameras outside Mr. Soljankic's house in the northeastern town of Tuzla after delivering the news with a birthday cake.

But the former soldier and his wife admitted they did not recognise one of the world's most photographed women.

"I'm very happy but I don't know who Princess Diana is. I don't understand why they're all here," said Mr. Soljankic's wife, Ramiza, looking at the herd of British journalists and photographers who had gathered outside her modest home.

Neighbours came out to see what the fuss was as

photographers with long lenses stepped through hedges and climbed onto a shed to get a shot of the divorced princess, who is trying to promote her role as a roving humanitarian ambassador.

Princess Diana's trip to Bosnia came at a time when speculation about her love life hit new heights with London tabloids splashing photos of her with film producer Dodi Fayed, son of Egyptian tycoon Mohammed Al-Fayed, who owns London's luxury department store Harrods.

Her marriage to British royal heir Prince Charles ended in divorce in 1996 after 15 years.

The 36-year-old princess was invited by the Washington-based Landmine Survivors Network to raise awareness of the terrible toll caused by mines in a three-day visit to Bosnia, all of it in the territory of the Muslim-Croat Federation.

She was due to attend a "sitting" volleyball match between mine victims in the central town of Zenica later Saturday.

Ken Rutherford, American co-founder of the network who lost both his legs in Somalia in 1993, said Friday after a dinner meeting with Princess Diana that she would make a "huge difference" to the cause.

He said she knew all about the subject and had taken copious notes

throughout the meal with a group of 20 mine victims. "She's not faking. I'm a landmine victim myself and I know when people are faking."

Plamenko Priganica, another mine victim who chaired the dinner meeting, said he hoped Princess Diana could raise funds to help remove the two to three million mines scattered across Bosnia.

"We launched an appeal to the princess and asked her to give this message to the rest of the world on our behalf," Mr. Priganica said.

Tabloid reporters were more interested in uncovering her friendship with Mr. Fayed than in learning about efforts to ban anti-personnel mines.

"Whatever (the) other distractions are, she puts her mind on what she's doing. She is in excellent form," her friend Lord Deedes told reporters.

Princess Diana was not expected to visit Serb-controlled territory in Bosnia due to security concerns following a raid by British special forces to arrest two Serbs wanted by the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal.

One of the suspects was shot dead while resisting arrest while the other was apprehended and sent to the Hague for trial.

Hong Kong debates fate of Taiwan's 'China' flag

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa has sparked a debate in Hong Kong on the fate of Taiwan's rival "China" flag, which has flown here with impunity for decades but now faces an uncertain future.

Newspapers Saturday carried a spectrum of views on the flag, which has become highly sensitive since the territory joined China on July 1 after 156 years as a British colony.

China-backed Tung said Thursday he was mulling whether to allow Taiwan's Nationalist "Republic of China" flag to be flown in the territory this year on Oct. 10, Taiwan's national day.

In the past, the day known as the Double Tenth has been marked with flags hoisted prominently in the territory along the Nathan Road shopping street, in the Wanchai waterfront area and in villages across the territory.

The flag is blue with a white sun on a red patch, in stark contrast to Beijing's red flag with five golden stars and Hong Kong's new red flag with a white baobab tree blossom.

Beijing regards Taiwan as a renegade province that split when the Nationalists lost power to the Communists on the mainland at the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949.

The Beijing government hotly opposes any notion of two Chinas and sees its "one country two systems" recovery of Hong Kong as a model for Taiwan's eventual return to the fold.

Taiwan's diplomatic partners have been forced to shut their consulates in Hong Kong since it became part of China.

Pro-Taiwan groups appeared divided about whether they should fly the flag. Oct. 10 marks the Xinhai Revolution, the day in 1911 when the imperial Qing dynasty was toppled and the Republic of China, ruled by Sun Yat Sen's Kuomintang Party, was founded.

"Some people may just think the 1911 revolution was a memorable event and have a tradition to celebrate it," said Dick Tse of the pro-Taiwan 123 alliance, a Hong Kong political party.

"We will continue to do what we have been doing. If we abandon our traditions before they are banned, it would be like fleeing before your enemies have fired," Mr. Tse said. He said his group might write to Mr. Tung urging him not to ban the flag.

Hoisting the Taiwan flag might be a breach of the

new constitution, the Basic Law, said Hong Kong's second most senior government lawyer, Deputy Solicitor General Stephen Wong.

"Since a flag is a symbol of sovereignty, raising it could be interpreted that you are advocating a sovereign state," Mr. Wong said.

Byron Weng, a professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, said it should be permissible to display the flag privately in offices or at home, but not in public places.

"I'm waiting to see how the officials handle this during the double 10th celebration. It will be a test this year," he said.

Jimmy Lee, leader of the Hong Kong and Kowloon Trade Union Council, a pro-Taiwan group organising Oct. 10 celebrations, said the alternative could be to fly flags decorated with the plum blossom, a Chinese national floral emblem.

Taiwan's China Airlines adopted this emblem recently.

"There is a view that we should respect the first Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government and consider the sensitivity of flying the flag," Mr. Lee said.

Former South Korea leaders may be pardoned early next year

SEOUL (AFP) — Korean President Young-Sam is likely to pardon former President Chun Doo-Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo before he finishes his term early next year, a senior government official said Saturday.

"It belongs to the president's prerogatives to pardon convicted," the identified official was quoted as saying by a news agency.

"But it is expected the president will pardon the issue of pardoning two former presidents before he finishes his official tenure," he said.

He also cited a Korean proverb, saying: "The one who tied the knot should untie it."

The two former military generals-turned-presidents convicted last year on charges of masterminding a 1979 military coup and the bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Kwangju the following year.

The two, former allies of Mr. Kim, were also convicted of corruption.

Mr. Chun was initially sentenced to death and Mr. Roh to 22 and half years in August 1996 by the Seoul district court.

Mr. Chun's death sentence was commuted to life in prison and Mr. Roh to 17 years in December by the appeals court here. Both gave up a challenge to the appeals court ruling.

Human rights activists and residents in Kwangju reacted angrily to the amnesty report, calling it an election year strategy to win support from voters in populous North Kyongsang, the home province of Chun and Roh.

The December presidential election will pit ruling New Korea Party candidate Lee Hoi-Chang against veteran opposition leaders Kim Dae-Jung and Kim Jong-Pil.

"Chun has not admitted being guilty or apologised. He is now even trying to launder his hidden slush money. The president must not pardon a person like him for political gains," said Cho Pio, a Roman Catholic priest who witnessed the bloodshed in Kwangju in 1980 which left more than 200 people dead.

He also called for the release of "prisoners of conscience" and some 1,000 Roman Catholic churches nationwide will pray for them late Saturday.

Human rights activists said some 980 people, most of them students, were behind bars on charges of violating the laws on assemblies or the draconian National Security Law.

Many of them have been charged with supporting the North Korean cause, organising underground leftist rings, leading violent protests or contacting North Koreans — activities banned under the strict National Security Law.

The South Korean government is opposed to calling them prisoners of conscience.

The report came after a group of Buddhist monks conveyed 2.7 million names gathered through a signature collection campaign to appeal for the release of Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh "for the sake of national reconciliation."

Mingahyup, the association of relatives of jailed dissidents, has launched a signature-collection campaign aimed at preventing the release of Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh and pressuring the government to free jailed dissidents.

"The people's power led the government to agree to punish Chun and Roh. Should the president pardon them without consent from the people, he would face fury from the people," she said.

26 Colombian troops killed in clash

BOGOTA (R) — Marxist guerrillas said Friday they had killed 26 soldiers posing as right-wing paramilitary fighters, and that six of their own men had died in a fierce battle in eastern Colombia.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the country's oldest and largest rebel force, said they attacked the troops last Saturday in an isolated hamlet about 40 kilometres from the town of Mapiripán, which was the scene of a brutal massacre last month.

Army and Red Cross sources were unable to confirm the claims made in a communiqué, a copy of which was obtained by Reuters. But the police inspector in Mapiripán said some villagers heard gunshots last weekend, and that there were strong rumours that guerrillas and right-wing

paramilitaries had clashed. "The FARC fought with a patrol which carried out the (recent) assassinations in Mapiripán ... 26 soldiers were killed and 17 were injured. Six of our own fighters died," the communiqué said.

In a separate communiqué last week, the FARC accused army counterinsurgency troops of killing at least 30 people in Mapiripán, in Meta province, in July. The Colombian police said a newly formed right-wing paramilitary group was responsible for those murders.

The corpses of just a handful of the victims of the original massacre were found. Red cross officials said the others were thought to have been thrown into a nearby river.

None of the corpses of those supposedly killed in last weekend's fighting

have been recovered, a spokesman for the chief prosecutor's office said.

"Some of the neighbours heard shooting and there are rumours that the guerrilla and paramilitaries had a battle," Mapiripán Police Inspector Luis Prieto said. "But nobody likes to speak around here ... and nobody has asked us to go out to that place to investigate."

Leftist guerrillas and right-wing paramilitary groups have stepped up their campaign of violence in the last few months. The guerrillas allege that the paramilitary groups are closely linked to the armed forces.

The bodies of at least seven suspected paramilitary fighters were found scattered in several locations around Meta earlier this week though none were found close to Mapiripán.

U.N. names American third member to Congo inquiry panel

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — U.N. chief Kofi Annan Friday named a U.S. human rights expert to a panel that will probe alleged massacres of Rwandan refugees in the former Zaire, a U.N. spokesman said.

President Laurent Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo was informed of the U.N. decision to name Reed Brody to the committee, which also includes Aisu-Koffi Amega of Togo and Andrew Chigovera of Zimbabwe.

The panel will meet in Geneva next week before traveling to Kinshasa, the spokesman said. But Human Rights Watch expressed "serious concerns" about the participation of Mr. Chigovera, Zimbabwe's attorney general, in the investigation.

"As a civil servant of a government that has allied itself with the government under investigation, Mr. Chigovera cannot meet the high standards of impartiality and independence that this investigation warrants," said Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch said in a letter to Mr. Annan.

Mr. Kabila Friday accused the United Nations of dragging its feet over sending the mission to Kinshasa, urging the panel to end the "uncertainties and gratuitous condemnations" of a people who have just recovered their freedom, a reference to his rebellion and ouster of Mobutu Sese Seko in former Zaire.

Mr. Kabila initially rejected a U.N. mission headed by Chilean Roberto Garretón, accusing Mr. Garretón of making a false report about the massacres. However, in July he accepted a fresh mission.

Mr. Brody was previously human rights director for the U.N. mission to El Salvador and executive director of the International Human Rights Law Group.

Congress woos Sonia Gandhi, says India is not doomed to coalitions

CALCUTTA (AFP) — India's Congress (I) Party Saturday urged Sonia Gandhi, the enigmatic Italian-born widow of slain Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, to take over the leadership of the party.

Congress President Sitaram Kesri made the appeal while addressing delegates on the second day of a three-day national convention here, being attended by Sonia Gandhi.

"Though I am the elected president of the party, I have no hesitation in offering you the party leadership," an emotionally-charged Mr. Kesri, 77, said at the end of his hour-long speech.

"Do what you feel like, Madame Gandhi, but don't de-link yourself from the Congress. Be with us." "You have been meditating for six years. Now the time has come for you to act."

A profusely-garlanded Sonia Gandhi, 50, who reluctantly agreed to speak for about five minutes after several delegates pressed her to do so, avoided comment on Mr. Kesri's appeal.

But she said the Congress was moving away from the mass of poor Indians. "I am happy to be in Calcutta on this historic occasion, and bowing to public

demands I am going to say a few words," Ms. Gandhi said in Hindi, India's main language, before switching over quickly to English.

"We have lost touch with the toiling millions. The ideology of socialism, secularism and democracy is the only ideology for our great country."

"We need to unleash mass movements based on Congress ideology."

It was the first speech at a Congress meeting by Sonia Gandhi, who married into the illustrious Gandhi-Nehru family in 1968 and now lives under tight security in New Delhi.

The mother of two, a member of the 112-year-old Congress, has previously rejected appeals from party leaders to take over its leadership.

Sonia Gandhi's popularity was evident Saturday when delegates, many of them veteran politicians, gave her a standing ovation when she arrived at the venue wearing a colourful Saree, the traditional dress of Indian women.

In his speech, Mr. Kesri, who has vowed to replace India's multi-party government with his own administration, denied that the country was doomed to a series of future coalitions.

Mr. Kesri said parties could still come to power in the world's largest democracy, and ridiculed reports that only coalitions spell the way forward.

"(This) is erroneous, dangerous and factually incorrect," he told some 4,000 delegates at a sports stadium. "It is too simplistic to come to such a conclusion from the results of one or two elections."

He said the "thesis ... was being propounded by parties who can never come to power on their own programmes and strength."

Mr. Kesri had, however, said Friday that he would not immediately topple Mr. Gujral's centre-left coalition, made up of more than a dozen parties and which survives with the crucial parliamentary backing of the Congress.

The Congress ruled India for almost half a century since independence in 1947. It suffered its worst electoral rout in 1996.

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ASH (R) — Throu of Romanen dea the government the International son fund poured Friday to protest aginst to close schools in a new factories in a new plant across the day after Prime Victor Chiorbea said a list of 17 hos- spects to be closed by the end of the year. About 30,000 sea ake. 25,000 shouting pro- d outside the town of the oil centre of kilometres where they are slated for from Mr. and two gen- the in the afternoon, protesters smashed the building. No were reported. "The IMF" protest-



Doves flutter over Peace Park in Nagasaki, southwest Japan Saturday, marking the 52nd anniversary of the 1945 atomic bombing of the city which killed over 115,000 people. In background is the Peace Statue, a bronze statue of a half-naked man with its right hand pointing upward to symbolize the threat of the atomic bomb, and its left hand stretching horizontally for peace (Reuter photo)

Nagasaki marks atomic-bomb day

NAGASAKI (AFP) — Church bells tolled and sirens wailed as this southern Japan port marked the 52nd anniversary of its atomic-bomb holocaust Saturday with an attack on a recent U.S. plutonium experiment.

"We demand an end to all kinds of experiments on nuclear weapons," Nagasaki Mayor Ichiro Ito declared before some 22,000 people gathered in a park for a memorial service in wind and rain.

"The government should take a stern position against the 'subcritical experiment,'" said Mr. Ito, whose late father was one of the survivors of the U.S. atomic-bombing which killed some 74,000 people instantly or within months.

The 51-year-old mayor was referring to the July 2 underground test in Nevada, in which conventional high explosives were used to blast small targets of plutonium into tiny particles.

The data collected from the blast was to be used to predict the behavior of plutonium during full-scale explosions. Washington claims the test did not con-

tribute its commitment to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty because there was no chain reaction.

"I feel indignation at another nuclear test with another name," said Koichi Wada, 70, as he spoke on behalf of A-bomb survivors in the ceremony at Peace Park, near the epicentre of the plutonium bomb blast.

"I will keep on talking about my experience for my children and grandchildren so that we shall never repeat the same mistake," he said after a minute of silence at 11:02 a.m., the time of the explosion.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, in a message read by a cabinet minister at the service, remained non-committal about the U.S. test which has also drawn protests from other countries including China, India and Libya.

Mr. Hashimoto instead called on all countries to sign the test ban pact as soon as possible.

The appeals Saturday varied little from those made in Hiroshima three days earlier when the former garrison town marked the 52nd an-

niversary of the history's first nuclear attack — an uranium bomb which left an estimated 140,000 dead in a hall of fire, heat and radiation.

But, in a twist to the nation's obsession with its militarist past, the mayor's message broke with a seven-year tradition of offering apologies to other Asian nations for wartime aggression.

Mr. Ito still called on the nation to reflect "deeply upon the fact of Japan's history of aggression and wrongdoing in the Asia-Pacific region."

He explained to reporters earlier that it was the national government that had to make such an apology.

But anti-war and other groups have pointed out that Nagasaki's appeal for peace would be less convincing without regret and reflection over Japan's war responsibility.

Nagasaki has always played the second fiddle to Hiroshima in A-bomb anniversaries. But it has offered deep prayer befitting the hilly port which was founded by a Jesuit missionary as

the cradle of Japan's Christianity in the 16th century.

It was even a second choice as the target of the powerful plutonium bomb named "Fat Man" after Sir Winston Churchill.

The B-29 "Boxcar" bomber from the U.S. base on the Pacific island of Tinian could not drop the device over the first choice, the industrial city of Kokura north of Nagasaki, because of thick clouds.

The 4.5-tonne bomb was hastily released over Nagasaki, which was also home to naval industries, as the plane was running out of fuel and barely reached U.S.-controlled Okinawa.

At Urugami Cathedral, Father Saburo Nishida and a dozen Roman Catholics were crushed to death by falling debris when they were congregating on the fateful morning.

A morning mass remembered the tragedy at the rebuilt cathedral with Father Seiichi Mimura telling some 1,000 faithful, "let us keep on talking about the Genbaku (atomic bomb) as we go on."

Bomb explodes in front of Spanish police barracks

SARAGOSSA (AFP) — Security forces in northern Spain Saturday set up roadblocks around a ski village close to the French border, seeking to find the people responsible for a bomb which exploded overnight in front of a police barracks.

No group has yet come forward to claim the attack but officials said the blast bore the hallmarks of an attack by the Basque separatist group ETA.

The explosion blew out the windows in nearby buildings

but caused no injuries, the officials added.

The blast took place outside the barracks of the Guardia Civil in Sallent de Gallego, in the Spanish Pyrenees at around 3:15 a.m. (0115 GMT) Saturday, they said.

Examination of the scene showed the bomb had been made of 10 kilograms of amoniac, an explosive frequently used by the Basque separatist organisation ETA, officials said. It was placed in a rucksack and hidden

close to the entrance of the barracks. Most of the explosives failed to go off, they added.

Elsewhere in Spain, unidentified attackers threw five petrol bombs at the house of a regional councillor in Azpetia the northern Basque province of Guipuzcoa, the Basque Interior Ministry said.

The facade of the building, which belongs to Roman Sudepe, a councillor for the moderate Basque Nationalist Party, was

slightly blackened in the overnight attack.

Basque regional police also said that groups of young radical Basque separatists threw petrol bombs at banks in Lasarte and Usurbil during the night, causing small amounts of damage.

The region has been tense since the killing of an ETA hostage last month and a series of anti-ETA demonstrations across Spain. ETA is fighting for independence for the Basque region of northern Spain.

Mass protests defy plant closures in Romania

PLIESTI (R) — Thousands of Romanians denouncing the government and the International Monetary Fund poured into streets and blocked rail lines Friday to protest against plans to close loss-making factories in a new phase of market reform.

The mainly peaceful protests took place across the country a day after Prime Minister Victor Ciiorbea announced a list of 17 loss-making plants to be closed down quickly at the urging of the IMF. About 30,000 jobs are at stake.

Up to 5,000 shouting protesters faced riot police deployed outside the town hall in the oil centre of Ploiesti, 60 kilometres north of Bucharest, where two refineries are slated for closure. They demanded an explanation from Mr. Ciiorbea.

Police said two gendarmes suffered minor injuries late in the afternoon when protesters smashed windows and tried to break into the building. No arrests were reported.

"Traitors, traitors" "you sold us to the IMF" protest-

ers shouted, punching the air with their fists outside the grim concrete building erected during the 25-year rule of communist dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu. "Come and talk to us" one poster held aloft portrayed Mr. Ciiorbea and President Emil Constantinescu as puppets on strings being pulled by the IMF. Workers said they found refinery gates closed Friday, and were given no explanations. "Oilmen, unite" they shouted.

"What the Americans couldn't do with wartime bombs, this government is doing now," said one man, referring to allied bombing raids on the Ploiesti oil fields when Romania was allied with Nazi Germany. "They are destroying our oil industry."

Two junior ministers rushed to Ploiesti to discuss the closure of the Petrol and Vega refineries with local officials, who urged the government to reconsider its plans.

The oil industry, with huge excess capacity from the communist era, has been singled out as one of the country's most ineffi-

cient sectors. Other plants on the hit list are in the chemical and food processing industries.

Workers at a third doomed refinery at Darmanesti, in eastern Romania, were held hostage by government officials in company offices.

Television showed 6,000 workers blocking traffic in the Danube river port of Braila with trucks, cranes and excavators.

In Cluj, in the central Transylvania region, 1,200 workers said they would remain in their metal plant until they received more information about its inclusion on the list.

Leaders of the Prahova county council in Ploiesti urged the government to consider local plant closures, saying the announcement came days after damage caused by flooding.

Fifteen kilometres east of Ploiesti, in the wine-producing town of Valea Caluga-reasca, dozens of employees of a chemical plant also due to be closed sat on rail lines and blocked a Moscow-bound

express train for most of the day.

The train with some 300 Russians and Ukrainians returning from seaside holidays in Bulgaria, was routed after riot police removed the protesters.

Mr. Ciiorbea, speaking Thursday after a month-long IMF assessment of reforms, said water, power and other services would be cut to the plants due to be closed.

But a spokesman for the state power utility said no such order had been received, at least for the oil refineries.

The government launched reforms after defeating leftists in last year's elections. It won IMF praise for curbing inflation, which fell to a record month-on-month low of 0.7 per cent in July.

The Leu currency is largely stable, foreign reserves are on the rise and the government revised the budget to keep the deficit within IMF limits. But Mr. Ciiorbea admitted that closure of loss-making industry had been delayed for too long.

U.S. envoy arrives in Cambodia, as king attacks new 1st premier

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — A U.S. special envoy arrived here Saturday for talks on the Cambodian crisis, which appeared to deepen as King Norodom Sihanouk slammed the country's new premier as a "puppet" of strongman Hun Sen.

The envoy, Desaix Anderson, arrived in Phnom Penh saying Washington would do business with Cambodia's new First Premier Ung Huot, despite uproar over his "undemocratic" appointment last week.

"I think it's clear that we will continue to deal with the Cambodian government despite our reaction to his election a couple of days ago," he told reporters, adding he had not brought any action plan with him. The United States has said the appointment of Mr. Ung Huot was not democratic as first Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh was replaced and stripped of his legal immunity without a debate and in a climate of "fear and intimidation."

But it was unclear whether Mr. Anderson would meet the disputed premier, even though Second Prime Minister Hun Sen cancelled his appointment with Mr. Anderson after his mother fell seriously ill.

U.S. embassy officials at

first said the envoy "had no plans" to meet the new leader who is strongly backed by Mr. Hun Sen. But later Saturday, after an apparent change of plan, they said that such a meeting was possible.

Cambodian officials meanwhile said they had "thought it likely" that the envoy would meet Mr. Ung Huot following the cancellation of the Hun Sen meeting. But the 24-hour trip of the envoy, who is due to meet Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) officials in Singapore Monday to report on his visit, was overshadowed by a savage attack on Mr. Ung Huot by Cambodia's king, "I must recognise that we have three first prime ministers: one in forced exile, one 'puppet' and one actual master of Cambodia," King Sihanouk said in a statement faxed to AFP from his Beijing residence. "This is the actual situation, which I cannot ignore," he wrote three days after Parliament voted to confirm Mr. Ung Huot as first premier to replace the King's Son Prince Ranariddh, who was ousted by Mr. Hun Sen last month.

Prince Ranariddh left Cambodia in early July before Mr. Hun Sen's troops

seized control of the country after pitched street battles here against royalist soldiers which the prince and his supporters branded a "coup." He remains in exile, arriving in the Thai capital Bangkok Saturday to meet his supporters ahead of a series of key meetings on the Cambodian crisis next week.

"I still consider his royal highness Prince Ranariddh as being the legal first prime minister of Cambodia," King Sihanouk said. But he said, in another letter to an opposition politician received in Bangkok, that as a constitutional monarch he had no power to intervene in the crisis although he disagreed "totally" with the appointment.

He wrote: "The fate of our nation is terribly sad. As for me I have no ability to do anything. The power is totally in their hands. Their views are totally different from mine. I have no possibility to make them follow my way." But despite his opposition to Mr. Ung Huot's elevation, he said he would receive Mr. Hun Sen, Mr. Ung Huot and acting head of state Chea Sim — who signed the appointment decree on the king's behalf — in Beijing Tuesday.

The three are travelling to

the Chinese capital in the hope of garnering legitimacy for the moves which led to Mr. Ung Huot's taking over from the prince, analysts said.

Mr. Hun Sen's officials meanwhile brushed aside the king's tough remarks, saying he changed his mind often and that the comments would not affect the troika's trip to Beijing. "This is a problem, but it is just one of the attitudes of the king," a senior official in the Ministry of Information here told AFP. "He changes his mind a lot," he added.

The king complained in a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, received in Bangkok Saturday, that Phnom Penh would not allow him to play his constitutional role of supreme arbiter and guarantor of national institutions. Two U.S. political think-tanks launched their own scathing attack here on Mr. Ung Huot's appointment.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the International Republican Institute, which have been working to build democracy here for the past five years, said it was an "assault on democracy carried out under a cloud of fear and intimidation."

China's military chief meets Cohen, Albright

WASHINGTON (R) — China's military chief met with U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen Friday in a visit to improve relations frozen after Chinese soldiers crushed demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989.

General Fu Quanyou, chief of staff of the People's Liberation Army, was greeted in a full honours ceremony at the Pentagon, complete with 19-gun salute, by his American counterpart, General John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Military Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Gen. Fu also met later with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, a U.S. official said.

In discussions at the Pentagon, Gen. Fu and U.S. officials agreed that four-party talks on Korea should continue, according to a Defence Department official. The talks in New York this week between U.S., Chinese, North Korean and South Korean diplomats broke off Thursday.

Gen. Shalikashvili expressed pleasure that Gen. Fu had been able to keep an earlier promise to help U.S. military ships keep their established schedule of port calls to Hong Kong following the handover to China last month, the defence official said.

The question of Taiwan, often a bone of contention in U.S.-China relations, did not come up in Pentagon discussions, according to the defence official.

This was a reciprocal visit for Gen. Fu, who hosted Gen. Shalikashvili in Beijing in May.

At those earlier meetings, Gen. Shalikashvili said he favoured better military ties with China, but voiced concern about regional stability, and applauded moves toward "rational dialogue" over the question of Taiwan.

Noting the Clinton administration's desire for a politically stable and economically open China with respect for human rights and the rule of law, Gen. Shalikashvili said in May that military-to-military contacts would foster better understanding and cooperation between the two countries.

15 killed, 9 hurt as Pakistan sectarian violence spreads

LAHORE (AFP) — Fifteen people were killed and nine seriously wounded Saturday as sectarian violence spread in Pakistan five days before the country marks its 50th anniversary of independence.

Police said all victims in the two attacks, at separate places in the country's largest province of Punjab, were Shiite Muslims.

In a pre-dawn raid, two men on a motorcycle sprayed six people with bullets, killing them as they slept in the open outside their home in the village of Mondka, near the city of Multan in southern Punjab, police said.

A seventh person was injured and taken to hospital.

Hours later, six men riding motorcycles opened fire at a market in the city of Sheikhupura near Lahore, capital of Punjab, killing seven immediately and seriously wounding 11, with all of the casualties believed to be Shiites. Two of the injured later died in hospital.

The gunmen fired bursts from automatic weapons, targeting shops owned mostly by Shiites, and fled the scene, a police official said.

"It was apparently a sectarian attack," a senior police officer said.

Police immediately sealed all exits from Sheikhupura, an industrial city of two million Sunni and Shiite Muslims, in a bid to catch the attackers.

The two raids follow 13 other killings in two bomb and gun attacks on Sunni mosques in Multan and La-

hore Thursday. Those incidents came after eight Shiites died in an attack in the town of Shorekot Monday.

The spiral of revenge killings, blamed on militants from the majority Sunni and minority Shiite communities, has claimed more than 150 lives over the past seven months, overshadowing Pakistan's preparations for its 50th anniversary of independence on August 14.

The violence has increased pressure on the nearly six-month-old government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, whose brother-in-law, Chief Minister in Punjab, home to around 60 per cent of Pakistan's 135 million people.

Pakistani Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah has voiced concern over the government's inability to stop the killings, echoing strong criticism by the opposition, the press and the public.

The massive mandate received by Mr. Sharif's party in the February polls put a "great responsibility" on the government's shoulders, the news daily quoted the chief justice as saying.

If the government failed to deliver, it would narrow the scope of democracy in the country, Justice Shah told a seminar in Lahore Friday.

He said police investigations were flawed and witnesses were unwilling to testify for "fear of consequences."

"The government should protect them (witnesses) so they could stand in the witness box fearlessly," Justice

Shah said.

President Farooq Leghari was quoted by newspapers as saying a "foreign hand" — which he did not identify — was behind the sectarian violence in Punjab, stressing the need to enhance the efficiency of intelligence agencies.

"A foreign hand is behind terrorism. Inimical forces are taking advantage of the acts of terrorism," Mr. Leghari said.

Reports said 20 judges have been appointed to head special courts in Punjab to try serious crimes.

A senior police official told a superior court in Lahore Friday that several judges, politicians, civil servants and journalists were on a "hit list" of terrorists in Punjab.

People packing a courtroom in Lahore Saturday upset a scheduled hearing on violence in the country by the chief justice, witnesses said.

The audience, including opposition party workers, stood up and shouted slogans after a court official announced Justice Shah would hear views of Sunnis and Shiites on separate dates.

Some condemned the announcement, saying it would fan sectarian sentiment.

"We are Pakistanis. No one should try to divide us on sectarian lines," said politician, Rana Shahkhat.

A group of activists from former premier, Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party also staged a protest.

North Korean hunger to worsen as drought takes toll

BEIJING (R) — Searing drought in much of North Korea has wiped out nearly three-fourths of the maize crop and will further plunge the country into hunger and malnutrition, a United Nations aid worker said Saturday.

An initial survey by international food agencies of crops in North Korea had found stunted plants struggling to survive the blistering summer in the hermit nation, said Hilary Mackenzie, spokeswoman for the World Food Programme in Pyongyang.

"Seventy per cent of the maize crop has been lost, which has resulted in a loss of 1.5 million tonnes of cereals," Ms. Mackenzie said in an interview in Bei-

jing after two months based in the North Korean capital.

"The most stark effect that I saw was in the north-east, where the corn was a matter of inches high because of the drought," Ms. Mackenzie said. "It just couldn't grow."

Pyeongyang, armed with its "juche" philosophy of defiant self-reliance, had desperately mobilised brigades of people to carry water to the fields in a vain attempt to revive the withered crops, she said.

"The best thing now that they can do with the maize is chop it down and either use it as animal feedstuff with the leaves or plough it back into the land," she said.

The failed crops would

only worsen the already severe food shortages in North Korea, which has been hit with its worst heat-wave in 61 years after floods ravaged the country in 1995 and 1996. Ms. Mackenzie said.

North Korea was already short about one million tonnes of grain for the year, she said.

Pyeongyang had pinned hopes of immediate hunger relief on the maize harvest but the drought's impact on that and other crops meant chronic food shortages would last until at least November 1998, she said.

"We are concerned about the effect on paddy fields, which could be of alarming proportions," she said.

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A better future for Aqaba

THE GOVERNMENT appears poised to entertain ambitious plans for the city of Aqaba, including its transformation into a free zone area. Fayed Khasawneh, president of the Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) recently revealed that he intends to make Aqaba the Jabal Ali of Jordan in reference to the free trade area in Dubai. Of course nothing would gratify Jordanians more than to see their Red Sea port become a model for a free zone area in a bid to enhance the overall economic posture and prowess of the Kingdom. The ARA president sees in Aqaba several positive features which in their cumulative effect would lend support to its transformation into another Jabal Ali. The strategic position of Jordan as a crossroad for regional trade and commerce, the well-advanced infrastructures already in place in Aqaba and the plans to link it with a network of sea, air and land transportation systems including the construction of a four-lane highway are conceived as sufficient to duplicate the envious successes of Dubai in attracting foreign trade.

While the thought of enhancing the economic stature of Aqaba as a hub for regional trade and commerce is welcome news, there are still constraints in operation that may interfere with this grandiose project. What made Jabal Ali what it is goes beyond the free zone area itself. Dubai in its entirety is practically a free zone area where exchange of goods and ideas are liberated from bureaucracy and cumbersome controls, duties and customs. Jordan remains confined by a high customs policy and heavy-handed bureaucracy that are not in harmony with any free zone projects. All attempts to rid ourselves from stifling red tape have not come to fruition till this late hour, notwithstanding all the rhetoric to the contrary. The business mentality in the country has yet to be liberated from government's interference and remains very much under the thumb of state apparatuses.

Moreover, linking Aqaba with the other centres of commerce even in the country itself is far from accomplished. The mere building of a railway station, as suggested by Dr. Khasawneh, is certainly not enough. The 300 kilometres that separate Aqaba from the capital cannot be addressed by improving the desert road that now links them together. A much more advanced rail connection needs to be contemplated, albeit the cost would be exorbitant. Reliance on trucking alone would not serve the ultimate purpose of making Aqaba closer to the major centres of commerce in the region. Even the sea links remain rudimentary. Much more work and investment, therefore, need to be done before our dreams for the city can be realised. Still the mere thought of improving the stature of our only harbour is enough to make us all proud and hopeful for the future.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Dustour urged the public to respond to calls from the health authorities regarding family planning schemes for the sake of protecting mothers' health and to ensure a more decent and secure life for all families. Mohammad Daoud said that the economic life and the high cost of living are making it imperative on families to rearrange their priorities so that they can face up to the new challenges and meet their own needs. The cost of living in Jordan has reached new heights, unprecedented at any time before. The cost of health, education, basic services and rent is skyrocketing and the cost of transport is increasing with detrimental effects on the large families whose bread winners are no more able to meet the growing needs and the necessities of life, he noted. The smiler the family the higher the standard of living, the writer continued. Furthermore, he said, birth spacing, which is part of family planning, protects the health of the mother and ensures more healthy children. The writer said that family planning does not conflict with religious teachings because it is a sound way that ensures a more stable and secure life and a better future for the new generation.

A WRITER for Al Arab Al Yawm reflected on the intransigence of the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who, he said, is defying the whole world and showing total disregard to the peace agreements with the Arabs. Taher Adwan said that with his current policies, Mr. Netanyahu has succeeded in convincing the world that he is against peace and that he will ruin all peace bids and tear up all peace accords signed with Israel's Arab partners in the peace process. The Arabs, in general, and the Palestinians, in particular, cannot remain patient for ever and will not wait a hundred years for Mr. Netanyahu to accept their rightful demands for an end to occupation of Arab territories, said the writer. As for Jerusalem, it is a sacred city for millions of Muslims around the world and if that is taken from them, the whole Middle East is bound to face continued turmoil, he warned. The Arabs view Mr. Netanyahu as an arrogant man at the head of a government intent on depriving the Palestinian people of their right to freedom and of perpetuating Israel's occupation of Arab lands against all international laws and in defiance of all U.N. resolutions, said the writer. He said that the Israelis are in need of peace, like the Arabs, and they ought to seize the opportunity of negotiations with their Arab partners to secure a lasting peace for the future generations.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Research and development should not be imposed by law

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

THE COMPANIES Law in Jordan orders all shareholding companies to set aside one per cent of their annual profits to create a reserve to finance research and development. This is obviously an unjustified practice which continues to be enforced even after the government adopted a policy of deregulation and minimising intervention in the private sector.

Research and development is not a luxury that can be taken or left. It is not meant to serve the public interest. It is a way to improve products and maximise profits. As such, it should be left completely to the management of each individual company to decide. The management knows the real needs for research and development of the company, more than both the legislature or the executive branches of government.

Even if the idea of requiring companies to make provisions for research and development is accepted, it is unlikely to find that the needs of all shareholding companies are identical. Some companies may need to spend on research much more than one per cent of their profits, such as pharmaceutical companies, while other category of shareholding companies may need less or nothing at all, such as hotels and companies producing services.

It is not easy to understand why different kinds of companies should be required to devote the same percentage for this purpose. It is not even known how this particular percentage was reached at, nor why the need of companies for research should be proportionate to the distributable profits.

After enforcing this practice for 13 years, it should be evident by now that it is not useful or practical. Some companies did not spend a penny on research, yet they were required by law to go on accumulating an R&D reserve. Other companies spent much more than the one percentage point specified by the Companies' Law.

I, of course, understand the benefits of research and development in companies and believe that our leading industrial companies should undertake more research, but this vital activity has nothing to do with the reserve set aside for this purpose. Any company that needs research and development should do that in house, or buy the expert service from specialised houses. The cost of such studies is of course a legitimate productive cost and should be charged to the profit and loss account of the year concerned, or spread over several years if warranted by circumstances, as the case may be, irrespective of whether the cost was equal, more, or less than one per

cent of the annual profit. As a matter of fact, some losing enterprises may need research and development much more than the profitable ones.

The article in the Companies Law imposing the one per cent provision for R&D did, by no means, influence the behaviour of managers of companies, neither positively nor negatively, regarding their approach to research. The article was and remained a mere redundant accounting entry.

When this state of affairs became evident, some institutions' appetite for cash started to move. Why not take the funds in the artificial provisions sitting in the balance sheets of most Jordanian companies to finance their own deficit? This practice is outrageous because research institutions should depend on fees received from companies who commission them to do studies, not from all companies across the board.

Shareholding companies are not cash cows ready to be milked; most of them are burdened with debt. They cannot absorb more non-productive financial burdens and their profits are not that high to justify the distribution of money to rent seekers. The companies pay their taxes. It is not acceptable to convert the research and development allocations to a new tax.

An encounter that hopefully 'will bring us closer towards peace'

By Dr. Hana Nasir

I HAD not met Captain Yossi before, but I had a rough encounter with him on Aug. 6. I was trying to go to Ramallah from Birzeit in a car driven by a University driver. The car was going through a dirt road near Beit El and we followed them. With me in the car were two female staff members of the university along with the 12-year-old daughter of one of them — an ordinary car load going home after a day's work.

After last week's suicide attack in Jerusalem, Israel closed off the West Bank and did not allow the Palestinians to go into Israel; there were, however, no official military orders against internal movements in the West Bank itself.

Hence our journey from Birzeit to Ramallah was in no way "illegal". Nevertheless, we were told by various people that there was a roadblock near Ramallah and that, to avoid it, we would have to go through small dirt roads which the military forces had left open.

The moment we hit the dirt road, a jeep carrying Captain Yossi followed and he shouted at us to stop the car and get out. We did this promptly. He then rudely ordered me to produce my identity card. I told him that he could ask for it in a decent manner. Yossi became furious, asserted that he was the captain in the area, and threatened to arrest me if I did not hand him my ID by the count of ten. I replied that he could count as much as he wanted. I would not give him the ID unless he asked for it politely. One of my companions argued with Yossi, telling him that he was dealing with law-abiding citizens and that there was no reason for any screaming and rudeness. Yossi became even more angry and called for a reinforcement. Within minutes another jeep with four soldiers arrived. They tried to coerce me into getting inside their car for questioning. I refused, explaining that there was no reason for this commotion since nothing illegal had taken place. I added that I had been directed to that area by an Israeli soldier at another roadblock who had said that the only way into Ramallah was via that route. This fuelled Yossi's anger and he insisted on going to check my story with this soldier. We went, his jeep following my car, and to his disappointment, my story was confirmed.

In the meantime, a Druze soldier accompanying Yossi was almost apologetic for Yossi's rudeness and he intervened, asking me politely for my ID. I gave it to him willingly. The Druze soldier then passed it on to Yossi who checked on his radio and probably found out that he was dealing with an ordinary citizen.

What bothered me most

about Yossi was his unnecessary rudeness. This type of rudeness is typical of most soldiers in the area and has absolutely nothing to do with security or suicide attacks. In fact, the harassment of and rudeness towards the Palestinians is general Israeli military behaviour. Unfortunately, the peace process has not changed that attitude at all. Of course, one can understand that feelings may be edgy in the aftermath of a suicide attack, but it should be clear that the Palestinians have genuinely condemned the attack. At the same time, the Palestinians cannot be held responsible for it as neither the identity nor the nationality of the attackers is yet known.

Furthermore, the Israelis are not the only party entitled to behave emotionally when loved ones are lost. Almost every Palestinian family has suffered from Israeli practices. I myself was illegally deported to Lebanon by Israel in 1974 and remained in exile for 19 consecutive years. My cousin Kamal Nasir was killed by an Israeli group in Lebanon in 1973. Kamal was a poet with tremendous compassion and commitment to peace. Yet he was not spared by the Israeli bullets. At Birzeit University — the small university that I head, 16 students have been killed over the last fifteen years or so when Israelis used live bullets to disperse student demonstrations.

The writer is president of Birzeit University. He contributed this comment to the Jordan Times.

Biggest changes during Labour — 'not economic or social, but constitutional'

By Gwynne Dyer

THREE MONTHS after Britain elected its first Labour government since the 1970s, it is becoming clear that the biggest changes during Prime Minister Tony Blair's watch will not be economic or social, but constitutional. Suddenly the possibility looms of a republican Britain, a federal Britain, even a dismembered Britain.

A British republic? Neither Blair nor Labour particularly wants to kill off the monarchy; this is suicide, not murder. But the royal family's steep fall from weddings of fairy-tale princesses to its present dire image was summed up in the colour photo that splashed across the front page of almost every British daily paper on July 24, the day after the memorial service in Milan cathedral for murdered Italian fashion designer Gianni Versace.

There was ageing pop star Elton John, red-eyed from weeping — and there, one arm around his shoulder and the other hand splayed comfortingly across his chest, was Diana, ex-Princess of Wales, choking back her own tears. The mass-circulation British press has never been that fond of gay designers, gay singers, or upper-class young women who behave like starlets and give themselves tragic airs. But it has millions of readers who would have rebelled at such ruthless front-page treatment of a "royal" ten years ago, so that picture wouldn't have been published then. Now, they are just going with the flow.

Consider also that Princess Di's ex-husband, Prince Charles, who will inherit the British crown on his mother's death unless something goes terribly wrong, is now determined to marry the woman with whom he has conducted a decades-long affair. Over the past couple of months Camilla Parker Bowles, now divorced herself, has been the focus of attention at several high-profile events as part of a campaign to test her acceptability to the public as a future Queen of England. If that works, fine. If not, Charles will marry her anyway — which is admirable in the man, but potentially fatal for the monarchy.

The time is ripe for a constitutional upheaval in Britain. The Labour government has already pledged to take away voting rights from hereditary peers in the House of Lords. But once you attack the hereditary principle, where do you stop?

As Will Hutton, editor of "The Observer", wrote recently, "Charles's planned marriage to Camilla is a calculated political gamble, and one which he is reconciled to losing. Britain will be the first republic in history launched by its own royal family insisting that the country grow up."

Not only that, but it could be a federal republic. Twin referendums in September will let the 5 million Scots and the 1.5 million Welsh decide if they want separate parliaments to look after their own affairs. Scotland at least is certain to say yes.

The Scottish sense of separate destiny has been much sharpened by the past 18 years of Conservative rule in Britain. Scotland elects few Conservatives, and almost no right-wing ideologues of the sort that flourished in England. A separate Scottish parliament with control over most domestic affairs is seen partly as a shelter against further erratic behaviour by the English.

But that, promises Tony Blair, is as far as it would go. The Scottish parliament could raise an extra 3 per cent tax in Scotland if it wanted, but a Labour government in Scotland (which Blair confidently expects) would never do such a thing. The Welsh Assembly, if it comes to pass, will have no money-raising powers and will have to get by on the revenue handed over by London.

Above all, do not worry about the country breaking up. Neither of these new bodies will have the right to vote on the constitution of the United Kingdom, so they will not be able to vote for independence. Power is being "devolved", not irrevocably given away, and Westminster could always take it back if necessary. That is the theory, but the unintended side-effects of political actions are often greater than the intended effects.

One potential side-effect could be quite positive. Once the Celtic fringe blazes the way, the 50 million English may not remain content with a single, highly centralised national government that concentrates so much of the wealth in and around London. There would probably be pressure for further "devolution" to the English

regions as well, which would lead to a fully federal Britain. But from the start it would be a federation facing secession.

One side-effect of "devolution" is certain: a Scottish independence movement that grows until it takes up a large share of Britain's political attention and energy. The Canadian example, or more precisely the Quebec example, is instructive.

Two generations ago, in both Scotland and Quebec, politics followed a traditional left-right divide, with both major parties making nationalist noises from time to time but neither making nationalism the main issue. Since then, the Conservative Party has collapsed in both places, leaving no major contenders in the field except for the moderate centre-left (Liberal in Quebec, Labour in Scotland) and the once marginal hard nationalists.

The democratic reflexes of Scottish and Quebecois voters will not tolerate a perpetual one-party state, so the nationalist must be elected from time to time. In Quebec, the closed two-party fight between moderate nationalists and outright separatists has produced an inward-looking political culture obsessively fixated on ethnic grievances and a constant escalation in claims against the centre.

Once there is a Scottish government, the same effect will be produced there, regardless of the actual state of relations between Edinburgh and London. In ten years, the talk could well be about whether Scotland will secede from the federal republic of Britain.

LETTERS

If push comes to shove

To the Editor:

I AM a 24-year-old American man who is very interested in foreign relations. In an effort to get away from the bias of U.S. media, I have been reading daily foreign papers like yours and the Israeli Post. I find it interesting to see the different slants that papers in different countries give to stories like the Israeli/PLO crisis. Although I know Jordanians support the Palestinian cause, I would like to read in your paper about the current feeling of your people and what general feelings they hold for the future.

Although most Americans are pro-Israel, I tend to keep an open mind on the issues and find it very hard to believe that a permanent peace can ever exist in the region. My reason for this is simple: Israel will never divide Jerusalem, and that by itself is a condition that the current Palestinian regime will never accept. If final status talks ever happen, the disagreements and hard feelings will only grow and the chances for an escalating conflict will mushroom.

As far as Jordan and its Arab neighbours are concerned, I feel learning to accept Israel for good will be the best step towards peace and stability. It is a known fact that the Israelis do possess nuclear arsenal and would be willing to use it without hesitation if push came to shove. This fact alone is another reason why I cannot understand the perpetual feeling of Arabs that Israel is a country that can be pushed around. To the contrary, if the six-day war were to repeat itself today, there is no question in my mind that a nuclear nightmare would ensue. I certainly hope things would not come to that, and hope that I am wrong about a permanent peace.

Mike Wilbanks,
MWilb9492@aol.com

Peace and security

To the Editor:

THANK YOU for your fine English language newspaper. It is a great service to those who seek an Arab perspective and are not fluent in Arabic.

Your editorial "Lessons on promises" and Dr. Musa Keilani's article "Security for Israelis will remain an elusive dream without a peace settlement with the Palestinians" (Jordan Times, Aug. 2, 1997) make the point that Israel will have no security without concessions.

It should not be forgotten that Benjamin Netanyahu won basically because of Hamas terror, and now further terror gives him much more breathing room to crack down further and maintain a hardline.

Those of us who suspect Arafat of a two-pronged war against Israel (conciliation talk and negotiation, in English; support of terror and jihad in Arabic) are further strengthened. While your editorial's premise may be true, it is certain that the Palestinians will have no peace (or land) if Israel has no security.

S. Z. Neeman,
L.A. California,
U.S.

The glory of sharing

To the Editor:

I HAPPENED to be in Beirut when our national football team won the gold medal in the Pan-Arab Games. Since I am not a big fan of football I accepted to go to the games with little enthusiasm, but the minute we entered the stadium with the Jordanian flag, hundreds of people stood up and cheered for Jordan, which filled me with mixed emotions of happiness and a sudden hope for our team to win. The blue colour of the seats was so bright and the sky was clear, and this cheerful palette enhanced my optimism and was reflected as high spirits on our faces.

It is these events that show us how deeply we are attached to where we belong and introduce us to new sources of happiness that we can get by sharing with others the glory of their achievements.

Maysoon Haymoor,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Study provides 'valuable insight into some Arab attitudes towards Israel'

Partner or Pariah? Attitudes toward Israel in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan

By Hilal Khashan
Policy Paper Number Forty-One
The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C., 1996, 52 pp.
ISBN 0-944029-63-9

THIS MONOGRAPH in the Washington Institute's respected series of publications, though published last year, makes very timely reading these days. It should be carefully read and absorbed by officials — in Israel, the Arab World, the United States, Europe and elsewhere — who are engaged in policy-making related to Arab-Israeli peace-making and conflict resolution. Despite a very few ideological or technical shortcomings, this study provides valuable and pivotal insight into some Arab attitudes towards Israel and will prove extremely useful to those who should know but may not have easy access to the thoughts and attitudes of ordinary Arabs about Israel and peace-making.

The author is an associate professor of political science at the American University of Beirut, and has much experience in polling of Arab attitudes to peace with Israel. In this paper he analyses available survey data from polls conducted among selected segments of the Lebanese, Syrian, Jordanian and expatriate Palestinian populations in the period 1993-1995, i.e., around the time of the Oslo and Jordan-Israel peace accords, when optimism about peace-making was at its highest in the region.

The polls' general trends, he reports, reveal the following seemingly contradictory sentiments:

a. The overall percentage of Levantine Arabs who support peace talks increased after 1993.

b. Most Arabs perceive the peace talks and agreements "as a fait accompli that reflects the balance of power. Thus they accept it under duress rather than embracing and trying to advance the cause of peace."

c. Opinions vary widely, reflecting different religious and national affiliations and degrees of religiosity, thus in turn mirroring the wide variety of views in the Arab World.

Polls in 1993 and 1994 in Lebanon showed that the Shiite population, in an all-Muslim sample, was the most supportive of peace with Israel and that Shiite support for peace had increased over time — probably reflecting the fact that Shiite populations suffered the most in south Lebanon and thus supported peace because they had the most to gain from it. In 1994, for example, 56 per cent of Shiite students and 60 per cent of professionals supported peace talks with Israel, compared to 44 per cent and 48 per cent of Sunnis; among Lebanese Maronites the figures were 78 per cent and 82 per cent, among Syrians in Damascus 45 per cent, among Jordanians in Amman 66 per cent, among Palestinians in Beirut 17 per cent, and among Palestinians in Amman 63 per cent.

The data shows "a growing connection between the degree of Islamic fervour and negative attitudes towards Israel," particularly among those who declared themselves to be very religious. This is no surprise, given the tendency of people who are disappointed by the policies of their states to seek comfort and hope in the area of religion.

The author notes that fundamentalists' most frequent response to a question about their satisfaction with the peace process was that "Israel has no right to exist" (44 per cent). (It is also interesting, I would suggest, that this attitude is often mirrored among many religious and nationalist Jews and Israelis, who deny the right of the Palestinians to have their own state in Palestine.)

BOOK REVIEW

The author makes the important point that among "moderately religious" respondents, support for peace talks increased substantially in the period 1993-94. Large majorities of "highly religious" respondents (72-83 per cent) opposed peace, compared to 38 per cent of "moderately religious and irreligious Muslims" and 15 per cent of Maronite Christians. He draws the correct and important conclusion that "it is apparently evolving political developments — rather than unchanging religious convictions — that largely determine their attitudes..." This is a very significant finding that should be explored more deeply by Arab, Israeli and Western scholars; it confirms that changing political acts, rather than fixed religious sentiment, is the most important determinant of attitudes to "the other", and suggests that religious perceptions may end up playing a small role in the drive to achieve a fair and lasting peace.

Another important point in this study is that 65 per cent of "fundamentalists" reported previous political affiliations, including, in order of importance, Arab nationalism, leftist Palestinian groups, Fatah, and

Communist Party. This suggests to me that many who espouse Islamism today do so from a strong political activism perspective as much as from a commitment to religious morality and, also, that the two mix very easily and naturally. Findings like this, if they are repeatedly validated by other research, should pretty much discredit the non-sense espoused by many Israeli and American schol-

ars that deep religious and emotional attitudes among Arabs prevent movement towards compromise and peace with Israel.

Support for peace talks, the author points out, is accompanied by scepticism about the durability of existing accords: in 1993 and 1994, 88 per cent and 65 per cent respectively of Arab respondents did not think the peace accords with Israel would endure. There is also a strong underlying feeling among the Arabs polled that we are making peace because we have no other option, or that peace basically gives us time to reorganise and confront Israel more effectively in the future.

The polls show that "Arab suspicions about Israelis (and Jews in general) are deeply rooted." Respondents expressed strong concerns about Israeli economic dominance of the Arabs, the creation of a Greater Israel, Israeli control of Arab water resources and the creation of puppet Arab regimes in neighbouring states.

The author's analysis of the available polls also supports the view that the Arab reluctance to normalise with Israel on a people-to-people basis has remained strong and constant — even

among Arabs who support peace. There is very little Arab willingness to interact with Israelis, vacation in Israel, learn about Israel or attend professional courses there, the polls show. The author believes that most Arabs have made "a deliberate choice" to shun any form of interaction with Israelis — a fact that has been verified in recent years by the actions of most Jordanians, Palestinians and Egyptians, for example.

Further analysis of polls shows that the prospects for economic interaction among Arabs and Israelis remains low, and that most people are not willing to give the peace accords time to prove themselves.

The author concludes that these trends may be due to the fact that Arab leaders and governments have not done very much to socialise and prepare their people for peace, perhaps because some leaders themselves feel forced to make peace, do not see peace as a long-term strategic choice, and are not fully convinced of Israeli good intentions in the long run. The vast majority of Arabs oppose normalisation of relations with Israel and "abhor the thought of personal interaction with Israelis."

At the popular level, he concludes, "To many (Arabs), the Arab-Israeli conflict is not ending as much as being transformed. They view peace as surrender, continue to see Israel as illegitimate, believe the conflict has yet to run its course, and consider peace with Israel as a truce rather than a genuine end to hostilities."

An interesting conclusion relates to the role of the Islamists in Arab states, who, the author says, might reverse the peace process should they come to power. He feels that the strength of

the Islamists and of their anti-peace position should prompt the realization among Arab ruling elites that their (the elites') survival depends on tolerating greater pluralism. He notes: "Arab governments are fragile because they lack popular legitimacy. This peace at the official level — though significant — is not sufficient."

He ends, though, with some debatable statements such as: "Popular Arab views on peace and normalisation with Israel result more from stereotyping and emotion than realism and critical evaluation." This is one of several other statements of fact in the study that are either unproved or, in my opinion, wrong. Another example is the statement that fundamentalism could raise a barrier to Arab-Israeli peace and should be addressed because "highly religious Muslims constitute a large and probably growing segment of certain Arab societies."

This latter viewpoint is not proved, if I understand the author to be saying that political Islamism is growing in its popular appeal. There is recent poll evidence to the contrary from Palestine, for example, where discontent with the peace process is not translating into higher support for Hamas and other Islamists. The same is probably true in Jordan and Yemen, where the inclusion of the Islamists in the political process has led to their slow weakening and dropping credibility. In a strong study based on empirical evidence, the author and publisher should be more careful about slipping in such sweeping and subjective generalisations.

One of the weaknesses of this study is the lack of analysis of the behaviour of

the Israeli state as a factor in the formation of the deeply sceptical Arab attitudes towards peace. Several times the author makes statements that aim to explain Arab views on the basis of Arab actions only, such as, "in an atmosphere of constant anti-Israeli socialisation, the Arab public tends to assess Israeli intentions negatively and finds it very difficult to form positive impressions of Israel's intentions."

"We need to know more accurately why people have such strong negative views of the other side if we ever hope to resolve the conflict in a fair and lasting manner."

This kind of statement is far too broad, incomplete and unsubstantiated for an otherwise impressive and serious study such as this. The Arab public assesses Israeli intentions negatively largely because of our experience with Israeli policies and actions in the past half a century, not because of any socialising we are subjected to.

The strong and widespread Arab scepticism about peace expressed in the polls analysed in this study has been verified and probably expanded in the two years since the period covered by the study. This only adds to the accuracy, validity and pertinence of this booklet, and should

prompt further, comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon — in both Israeli and Arab societies. We need to know more accurately why people have such strong negative views of the other side if we ever hope to resolve the conflict in a fair and lasting manner.

I recommend this study highly to anyone interested in learning more about the underlying political, religious and emotional attitudes of Arabs towards peace-making with Israel; the few shortcomings of the study (whether ideological or logistical) are far outweighed by its depth and empirical strength. It provides great insight into and background for why the peace process has come to a standstill today; what is required to make it succeed in the end; it also helps us understand why Jordanians and Israelis, though their governments have signed peace accords with Israel, remain very critical of Israeli behaviour and why Jordanians are predominantly against normalisation of relations with Israelis.

It is noteworthy that this very useful and timely report is the work of an Arab scholar but is published by an American institute that is known for its rather pro-Israeli sympathies. This suggests the valuable scope for joint research among Arabs, Israelis, Americans and others around the world who wish to overcome the legacy of mistrust and who seek means of promoting a fair resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict based on reality rather than romance. The author and the Washington Institute are to be commended for a fine piece of work, and one hopes that this sort of cross-cultural research effort will continue and expand in the future.

Feasting weighs on Tongan king's diet

By Mary Fonua
Reuter

NUKU'ALOFA, Tonga — Weight watchers could do no better than to take the advice of Tonga's King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV, who recently celebrated his 79th birthday.

If you want to lose a lot of weight, "eat less, and eat less fat," the beefy monarch said.

That is challenging in this South Pacific kingdom of 100,000 where feasting is an affirmation of culture and a way of life.

The king has lost over 70 kg since he weighed in at his heaviest — a massive 201 kg — in 1976, although this year he has put a bit on and is over 130 kg.

Asked if there was any food the king liked but tried to avoid, he said, "Peking duck".

"But I do allow myself to have this once every six months," the king told reporters as he underwent one of his three weekly workouts in a gym he built and shares with his people.

Obesity affecting health

Diet and food became an issue after a nutrition survey a decade ago estimated more than 62 per cent of women in the age group 30-49 were obese, along with 10 per cent of all adult men.

Diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and a life expectancy of 69 years are the price of over-eating.

The king is trying to turn the tide of health problems, and Tongans of all ages are following his example.

Fitness programmes are in full swing and body

builders bulged from the floats in the king's birthday parade, pressing through the crowds on the streets of capital Nuku'alofa on the warm sunny day.

"Made on earth", declared the sash worn by a robust beauty queen, riding a float decorated with aromatic tropical flowers, while an aerobics class followed her with drummers beating out age old dance rhythms on skin drums.

King top dieter

Fittingly, the king is the kingdom's top dieter, achiever, says Lois Englberger, the Tonga government's nutrition adviser.

"The nearest we have recorded was a weight loss of 55 kg over a period of three years by a winner in our weight loss competition, although the king's weight loss was a great achievement over a much longer period," she said.

The king's birthday marked the start of Tonga's third national healthy weight loss competition, which will end on World Food Day on Oct. 16, when the king will present prizes.

Tonga's royal family literally stand out. They are larger and taller than most of their countrymen, although a younger generation of healthy Tongans epitomised by all black rugby union hero Jonah Lomu, is catching them up.

The royals' size reflects physical prowess as a selection criterion in centuries of arranged marriages, Polynesians' natural predisposition to store fat and the royals' never-ending obligation to preside over feasts.

After viewing a mili-

tary parade honouring his birthday, the king retired to attend a small family feast held in the grounds of his small seafaring Victorian-style palace, also showing signs of age where the red and white paint is peeling.

Bigger feasts will call for the big traditional dances, which bring 1,000 traditional dancers at a time on to the park beside the royal palace.

Feasts and celebration survive as a way of life because Tongans enjoy presenting them.

It is a display of the wealth of food that their friendly climate and fertile soil provides and a reaffirmation of numerous family lines and social responsibilities.

A big one (and that means the king is present) for an important occasion, may consist of thousands of cooked food baskets, 500 cooked pigs and other culinary concoctions.

Hundreds of guests attend the feasts and afterwards the food is distributed and redistributed, until everyone within reach has had a taste of suckling pig and yam.

The king does decline the fatty pork, saying he prefers seafood, such as lobster, fish and shell fish.

Occasionally, he eats lamb and chicken.

The enthusiasm of the dancers, new compositions of poetry and song, and the weight of national responsibilities, help keep this dedicated dieter's mind off temptations spread before him.

Tonga is the oldest and last Polynesian monarchy and the only Pacific island nation never to submit to foreign rule.

While Tonga's economy is fragile, dependent

on remittances and aid, its books are in the black and it is healthy compared to many Pacific island economies.

In August, the king will publish a booklet outlining "His Majesty's Health Programme" in English and Tongan.

It is a guide for the Tongan people with notes on smoking, AIDS, diet and health food and gives practical and religious encouragement on their "duty" to stay healthy.

Tongans will no doubt continue to sing and dance their way into the 21st century and are already planning the grandest celebration of all — Tonga's entry into the year 2000 when it lays claim to being the first nation on earth to see the dawn.

Now that should be a memorable feast.

King of Tonga, Taufa'ahau Tupou IV, is pictured at his 79th birthday celebrations in Nuku'alofa. The King of this South Pacific Kingdom of over 100,000 people, where feasting is an affirmation and a way of life, has lost over 70 kg since he weighed in at his heaviest — a massive 201 kg — in 1976. (Reuter photo)



Iraq prepares to renew oil exports

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq said Saturday it is ready to sign its first oil export contracts under the second phase of a U.N. oil-for-food accord after a two-month suspension in protest at delays in getting food and medicine.

"We are going to start today to conclude contacts with the oil companies approved by the government," said Saddam Zaban Hassan, director of the State Oil Marketing Organisation (SOMO).

"We have received lots of demands and we are capable of satisfying the market with our current export capacity," Mr. Hassan told AFP.

On Friday, a U.N. panel overseeing economic sanctions against Iraq approved a new pricing formula for Iraqi oil under the oil-for-food deal, allowing Baghdad once again to sign oil contracts with buyers.

"The first oil tankers are expected on Tuesday" to

load Iraqi crude from the Gulf terminal of Mina Al Bakr and the Turkish terminal at Ceyhan on the Mediterranean Sea, the SOMO official added.

Iraq announced Wednesday it will renew oil exports between Aug. 15 and Aug. 20 for the first time since early June.

The U.N. oil-for-food deal, which came into force in December, allows Iraq to export \$2 billion of oil every six months to raise money to buy food and medicine.

When the first six months was up in June, Iraq suspended its crude exports to protest against U.N. delays in approving its contracts to import food and medicine.

Because the \$2 billion allocation is split into two 90-day periods, Iraq will be left with less than a month, up until early September, to export \$1 billion worth of oil.

Asked about Iraq's export

capacity, Mr. Hassan would only say that "all possible efforts will be deployed to achieve the highest capacity" via Mina Al Bakr and the Turkish pipeline.

He said Iraq has stocked a quantity of crude at the Turkish terminal and that the oil pipeline from northern Iraq to Ceyhan is full.

"We have no problems concerning the pumping of oil to the two terminals or the quantities" to be exported, Mr. Hassan said.

Foreign experts have estimated that Iraq will need to export two million barrels a day (bpd) to generate a billion dollars by September.

Iraq says its export capacity is 1.8 million bpd, while experts put it at between 1.3 and 1.6 million bpd and say the two-month suspension in exports will cost Baghdad hundreds of millions of dollars.

The SOMO director said Iraq exported a total of 120 million barrels under 51

contracts in the first six months of the U.N. deal.

This means it exported an average of 666,666 barrels a day.

Iraq's first-stage buyers included U.S. giants Mobil, Texaco and Chevron, Elf Aquitaine and Total of France, the Anglo-Dutch Royal Dutch Shell, Lukoil of Russia, AGIP of Italy, Repsol of Spain and Japan's Mitsubishi.

The U.N. oil-for-food deal, enshrined in resolution 986, represents the first easing of an oil embargo imposed on Iraq after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Before the invasion of Kuwait, Iraq had an output capacity of 3.5 million bpd and its OPEC quota was set at 3.14 million bpd.

The oil embargo cannot be fully lifted until Iraq convinced the United Nations it has dismantled its weapons of mass destruction and meets other resolutions.

Israeli leader in uphill fight for reform

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu will have to withstand pressure from trade unions and other interest groups if he hopes to implement a treasury plan for accelerating economic growth, analysts said Friday.

Some academics and columnists hailed a 70-page treasury proposal unveiled Thursday as reasonable, although nothing revolutionary.

But trade unions alarmed by the prospect that their companies would face increased competition under the proposals threatened to call a nationwide strike.

Mr. Netanyahu's government will on Sunday for the first time discuss the proposals on privatisation, capital market reform and foreign currency liberalisation. It was unclear when ministers would vote on the plan.

Some commentators said it was typical for leaders to capture sensational headlines when introducing reforms only to have the ideas quietly disappear from the public agenda months later in the face of opposi-

tion. "The very changes that could bring about any sort of breakthrough and influence economic growth or the extent of government spending or the quality of our lives — these changes will be put off or torpedoed by the workers or specific interest groups," the financial daily Globes wrote in an editorial.

The Histadrut trade union federation was feeling the heat of the treasury recommendations to increase competition in industries dominated by state-owned companies with powerful workers' committees.

Columnist Sever Plotzker of the daily Yedioth Ahronoth said that in the long run some of the proposals would accelerate growth even if they did not address current economic problems, including inflation and unemployment.

Under the proposals, the Israel Electric Corporation's transmission monopoly for large customers would end, the cement market and bus services would be opened to competition and Israeli air-

lines other than state-owned El Al could fly selected domestic and foreign routes.

But Nechemia Strasler, economics editor for the newspaper Haaretz, said Mr. Netanyahu and recently appointed Finance Minister Yaacov Neeman would have to be firm to get the proposals through.

"In the end it all comes down to Netanyahu," Mr. Strasler told Reuters. He said that in a similar situation about a year ago the Israeli leader had buckled under pressure.

The government's sale last month of more shares in the main telecommunications company, Bezeq Israel Telecom, led to a one-day nationwide strike by 60,000 state workers and disruption of the telephone service.

Professor Haim Ben-Shahar of Tel Aviv University told Israel Radio: "I believe the most important thing is the matter of liberalisation in the foreign currency market."

The treasury called for further liberalisation of the foreign currency market but

gave no details other than to recommend the central bank proceed towards making the shekel fully convertible by mid-1998.

The proposals set a minimum privatisation target for 1998 of four billion shekels (\$1.1 billion), including the sale of the government's controlling shares in Israel's main commercial banks.

Receipts would be used to finance debt.

Israel set a four billion shekel privatisation target for this year but hopes the sale of a controlling stake in Bank Hapoalim will raise the sum to seven billion shekels.

Mr. Netanyahu had asked the treasury to draw up a plan aimed at reviving economic growth after rejecting its forecast that gross domestic product (GDP) would increase by only 3-3.5 per cent in 1998.

GDP is expected to expand only 2.5 per cent in 1997 after surging by more than six per cent a year for most of the decade.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	SAR	TRY	ILS	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.8553	0.6348	1.5140	117.09	1.3897	1811.20	2.0910	6.2570
DE Mark	0.5390	-	0.3421	0.8168	63.05	0.7489	976.40	1.1273	3.3722
GB Sterling	1.5754	2.9230	-	2.3848	184.64	2.1893	2859.34	3.3007	9.8735
CH Franc	0.6605	1.2245	0.4191	-	77.33	0.9178	1194.88	137.96	4.1294
JP Yen	0.0085	1.5834	0.5418	1.2922	-	1.1863	15.46	178.44	5.3395
CA Dollar	0.7196	1.3505	0.4542	1.1045	1.19	-	1320.03	1.5214	4.5554
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0236	0.3502	0.8835	1549.19	0.7668	-	11.54	3.4515
NL Guilder	0.4782	88.69	0.3035	72.40	55.97	0.6645	865.83	-	2.9909
FR Franc	0.1598	0.2965	0.1015	24.1968	18.70	0.2221	33.42	33.4200	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LEB	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7504	0.3770	3.6398	0.3049	3.6729	1538.00	3.3915
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2897	0.5317	5.1337	0.4300	5.1804	2189.25	4.7835
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0813	0.98	410.09	0.9043
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8806	9.5480	-	9.65	0.8088	9.74	4079.58	8.9960
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0838	1.01	422.55	0.9318
Kuwait Dinar	3.2798	2.3254	12.3004	1.2365	11.94	-	12.05	5044.28	0.9318
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0211	1.0126	0.9910	0.0830	-	418.74	0.9234
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4610	2.4385	0.2451	2.3666	0.1982	2.3881	-	2.2051
Egyptian	0.2948	0.2091	1.1058	0.1112	1.0732	0.0899	1.0830	453.48	-

Energy		
Oil	Last	Revised
Brent	19.32	19.59
W. Texa	20.06	20.43
Bonny	19.32	19.59
Dubai	17.75	18.15
UL Gas	214.00	222.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4948	0.16934	0.40383	31.2393
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.50528	0.17291	0.41234	31.8859
KW Dinar	3.2798	6.08843	2.0829	4.96771	384.32
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.92368	1.68464	4.01768	310.752
CY Pound	1.8282	3.3919	1.1604	2.7682	214.076

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	323.2	323.7
Silver (oz's)	4.39	4.41
Platinum (oz's)	441.5	444.5
AL (3 Months)	1741	1746
CU (3 Months)	2290	2295
Zinc (3 Months)	1540	1542
Lead (3 Months)	615	618
NI (3 Months)	2080	2070

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)					
Period	1	3	6	9	1
C'ncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.82	5.80	5.71	5.84	5.93
GBP	6.81	7.06	7.06	7.12	7.24
JPY	0.42	0.44	0.47	0.50	0.50
DEM	3.10	3.13	3.25	3.37	3.43
FRF	3.22	3.31	3.42	3.50	3.58
CHF	1.34	1.41	1.53	1.62	1.75
ITL	6.88	6.83	6.71	6.81	6.50

Main Equity Indices							
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls
New York	DOW JONES	8101.38	-86.84	-1.06	8184.05	8080.92	8158
New York	S&P 500	939.26	-11.93	-1.28	951.19	938.7	951.19
London	FT-SE 100	5012.2	-74.6	-1.47	5088.4	5009.4	5086.8
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	19604.46	128.81	0.66	19641.8	19258.1	19475.9
Paris	CAC 40	2988.9	-67.44	-2.21	3041.5	2981.1	3058.34
Frankfurt	DAX	4354.15	-60.2	-1.38	4404.14	4354.15	4414.35

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	197.17	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1487	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	341	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	144	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	21.64	Spot
Tea (c/kg)	165	Spot
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	460	Spot

JOD Currency Rates		
Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1335	1.1392
DE Mark	0.3762	0.3774
CH Franc	0.4615	0.4638
FR Franc	0.1113	0.1119
JP Yen	0.5963	0.5963
NL Guilder	0.3331	0.3348
IT Lira	0.3839	0.3858

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Egypt, Lebanon sign 12 agreements

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon and Egypt signed Friday a series of agreements to boost bilateral economic relations and set up a free trade zone, officials said.

The agreements were signed at the end of the meeting of the Egyptian-Lebanese joint committee, chaired by visiting Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal Al Ganzuri and his Lebanese counterpart Rafik Hariri.

Top government officials from the two countries sealed an agreement to consolidate judicial cooperation and two others to increase exchanges between Egyptian and Lebanese cham-

bers of industry, agriculture and trade.

The pacts will help readjust the trade balance between the two countries that currently tilts towards Egypt. Lebanon exported \$16.8 million worth of goods to Egypt last year while its imports totalled \$54.6 million.

The officials also signed seven understandings to set up a free trade zone, regulate the exchange of work force, hold exhibitions and boost cooperation in social affairs, administrative development, education and information.

Peanuts



Andy Capp

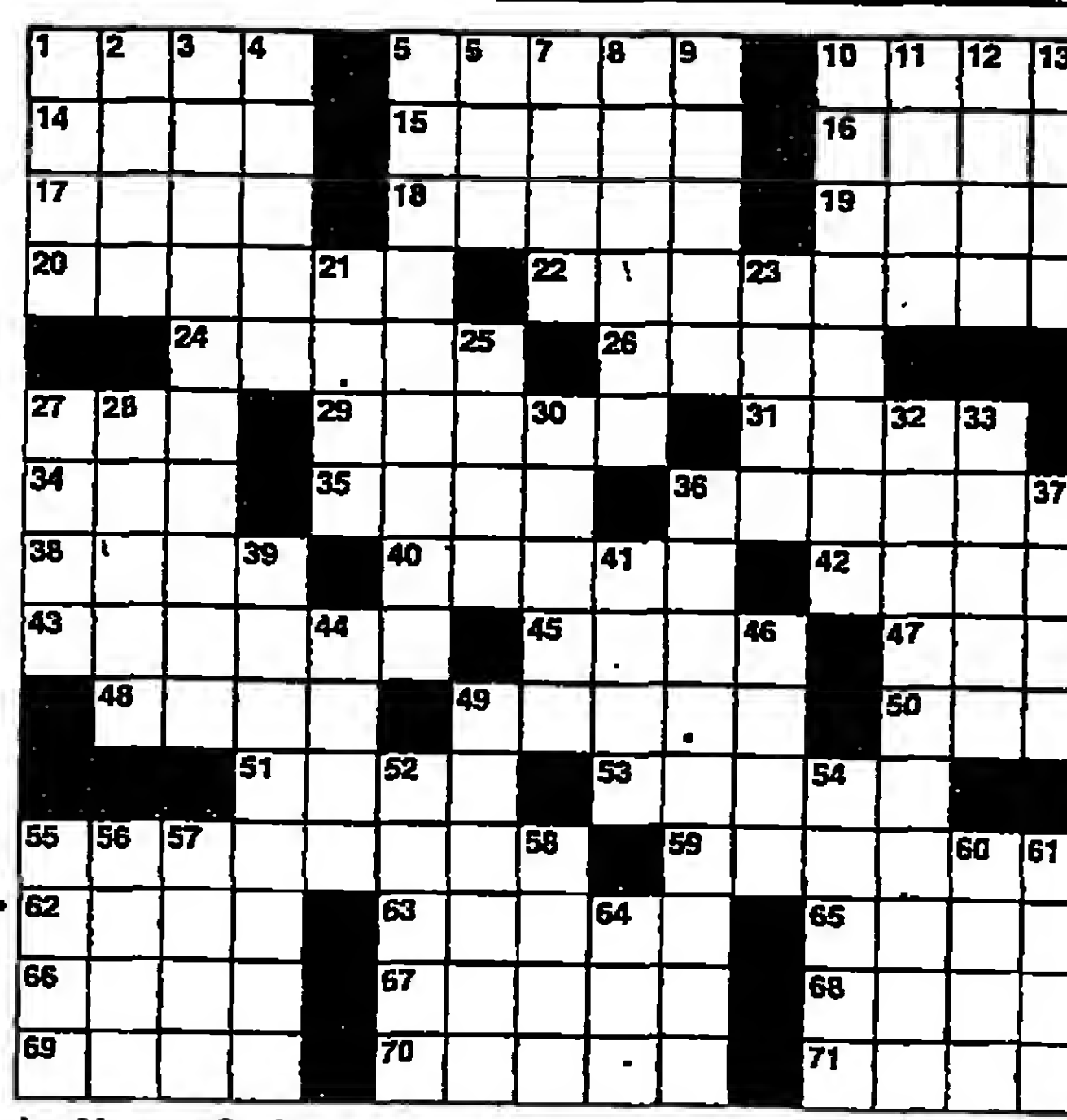


Mutt'n'Jeff



THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- Trail
 - Packaged
 - Tip (one's hat)
 - Reverberate
 - American Indian tribe
 - Director Kazan
 - Latin 1 word
 - Rose bush feature
 - Outlet
 - Native American
 - Meetings
 - Actor Kevin
 - Close tightly
 - "...a jolly good..."
 - "Andronicus"
 - General meaning
 - carte
 - Alan Greenspan's subj.
 - Cuban leader
 - Pandora's find
 - Law professor, Hill
 - Get through the grapevine
 - Hampton of music
 - Take care of
 - Layer
 - Constellation component
 - "...from — shining..."
 - Upper limit, briefly
 - Five for Pierre
 - The Montague kid
 - Police play
 - Abutting
 - Plant
 - Fry
 - Meat
 - Quechua
 - "To — human"
 - Painter Magritte
 - Othello, e.g.
 - Intuit
 - Shelters



by Norma Steinberg

Monday's Puzzle solved:



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- DOWN
- Pod contents
 - Pinnacle
 - Expression of gratitude
 - Lodging
 - Of plans
 - Baseball bat wood
 - New Mexico town
 - Way out
 - Thick
 - Diabolic
 - Bread spread
 - Helsinki resident
 - Domino or Waller
 - Quote
 - Long story
 - Short jacket
 - Greet
 - Designer Perry
 - Bring together
 - Cinderella's parent
 - Song refrain
 - From a part of China
 - African antelope
 - Place to get a burger
 - Rip
 - Buffalo's waterfront
 - Rounded top
 - Honest
 - Snouts
 - Newsboy's call
 - Gap filler
 - "A — clock scholar"
 - With the bow, in music
 - Rotate
 - Aquarium
 - Has bills
 - "the season..."

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get into a favourite hobby today with a group of close friends. Be sure you drive with the utmost care if you go out for recreational activities this evening, thereby you can eliminate any adverse situations.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) If you invite a business or financial expert to your home socially today, trying to get some free advice would alienate this person, so be tactful. Later this evening will be a good time to see any close friends.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Have a practical discussion with your mate this evening, and make some realistic plans for the days ahead. You should not stay out too late this evening, thereby, you will be alert to your career activities.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be more concerned with the romantic side of life this evening, as this is a very good time to do so. Be sure to drive very carefully later this evening, thereby you can reduce any difficult situations which appear.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Fellow business associates will be more cooperative than usual, so take advantage of this situation and make the best, thereby you can be successful. Social matters should be entrusted to later this evening.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This evening is fine for having an important discussion with a superior concerning career activities, however, use tact and you should not press any issues. Be sure to avoid any strangers later this evening.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) This is an excellent time today to settle a disagreement with your mate, and come to a fine understanding on the issues involved, before adverse words are spoken. A change of scenery would be good to relieve any tension.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Postpone any important business or personal discussions until after lunch today, thereby you can have better success. Use great caution in motion later this evening, especially while on the highway and avoid any difficulties.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Make sure you aren't forgetting any promises you have made recently, thereby you can retain your good reputation. Clear up a troubling business matter later this evening, however, you should not disagree.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) If you can possibly combine a business matter with some recreational activities, definitely do so, thereby you can have the best of both worlds. Take your mate out on the town later this evening for a special time together.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If you go out for some fun with your mate later this evening, be sure to do something you both enjoy, and stay well within your budget, so that you won't be short of fund in an emergency during the days ahead.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) The early hours of the days are fine today for visiting close friends, however, you would be wise to stay at home later this evening with your loved ones. Avoiding disagreeing with anyone today and thereby you can maintain harmony.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

Jordan, PNA to find office to flow of goods

JOH

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jordan, PNA to set up joint office to facilitate flow of goods

JORDAN AND the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) have agreed to set up a joint field office to coordinate trade issues between the two sides. The office, which will be situated in Ramallah, will basically aim at removing barriers hindering the flow of goods across the bridges. Abdul Fattah Al Kayed, who works for the Jordan Export Development and Trade Centres Corporation, was appointed as the Kingdom's representative in the office and it is expected that the PNA will appoint a representative for their side soon.

According to Secretary General Mohammed Halaqah, the office will endeavour to boost the volume of trade between the two sides and facilitate the import-export process. "More importantly, the joint office will accept any complaint from traders, exporters and businessmen from both sides and will analyse it before passing the complaint to the Jordanian and Palestinian decision-makers," Dr. Halaqah said noting that an immediate solution will be found upon any complaint reaching the decision-makers (Al Dustour).

Beware of counterfeit currency

THE CENTRAL Bank of Jordan (CBJ) has warned commercial banks, financial institutions and money exchangers of a rash of counterfeit Jordanian currency on the streets. The forgers cut the bank notes into two or three pieces and attach the forged pieces to the cut originals to make one note. The Central Bank requested that anyone found in possession of such forged notes be referred to the Public Security Directorate and that the notes be sent to the CBJ (Al Aswaq).

25 travel and tour offices merge into one large company

ACCORDING to Lamie Haddadin, president of the society of travel and tour agents, 25 offices have agreed to merge into one company which will be a limited liability entity. He said that practical steps have started to merge these travel and tour offices and noted that upon this tourism company taking final shape, it will be the first in the Kingdom to be the outcome of a group of offices and agents of travel and tourism.

There is a total of 200 travel and tour offices in Amman and by merging 25 of them in one company, Mr. Haddadin indicated, "will be a first step towards unifying the 200 offices into four large tourism companies to represent all tours and travel offices in Amman" (Al Dustour).

91 days imprisonment sentence for not repaying JD224,522

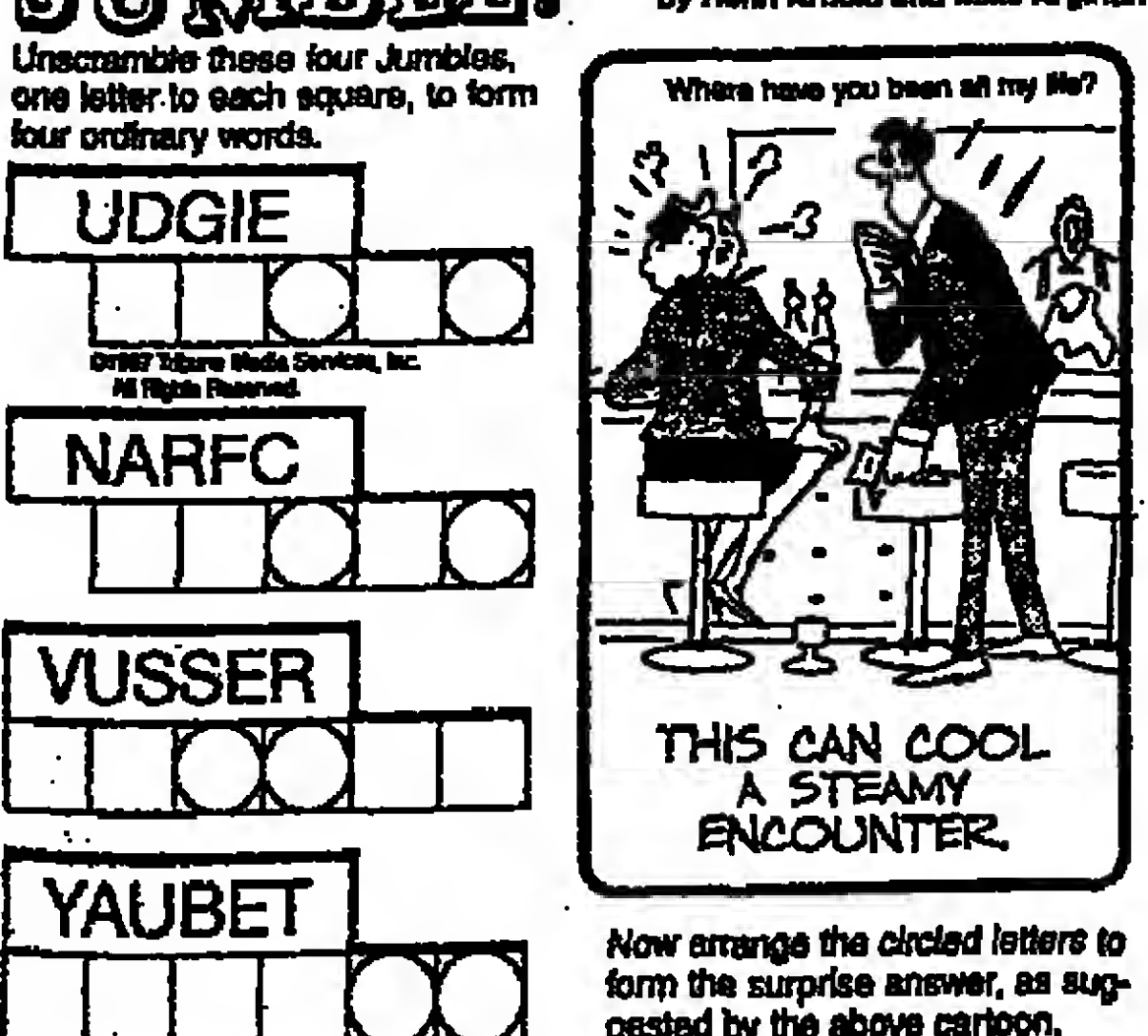
A PUBLIC announcement published in an Arabic daily said that Munir Sati Ahmad Lami has been sentenced to 91-day imprisonment for not repaying a JD224,522 debt to the Arab Land Bank. The debtor has seven days to appeal the decision or otherwise the imprisonment order will be executed.

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"When I gave up smoking, I switched to candy cigarettes. When my doctor told me to give up sugar, I switched back."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME



Print answer here: AN (Answers tomorrow)
Yesterday's Jumble: FISHY HENNA BEDBUG MARTIN
Answer: What the home run king was to his fans - A BIG HIT

Microsoft, Apple partnership stuns business world

BOSTON (AFP) — Two of the biggest names in the U.S. computing industry, Microsoft and Apple, have stunned the business world with their announcement of a partnership pact.

News that software giant Microsoft, the brainchild of billionaire Bill Gates, would invest \$150 million in Apple Computer prompted industry speculation on the reaction of competition-conscious U.S. anti-trust authorities.

Asked about the proposed deal at a news conference, President Bill Clinton was cautious.

He said the companies would be treated "in the same way we would any one else... I have to wait to hear from them (the Justice Department) about whether there are any antitrust implications."

But he noted that in recent years Microsoft had been involved "in various legal issues relating to its organization and operations."

Apple partners and Macintosh computer faithful at the Macworld Expo here generally welcomed the news, even as some speculated the investment was just a prelude to Microsoft's outright purchase of its smaller competitor.

"It's an infusion of fresh money and hope," said Donald Clark, a publishing house graphic designer.

"It's the first in a row of very positive developments," said Karne Tallackson, director of marketing at software firm ACI U.S., an Apple partner.

But Norcen McAllister, a

Mac-using artist, saw more sinister designs: "Bill Gates wants to take over the world, and eventually, Microsoft will take over Apple."

Overall, the response was more like that of Phuc Le Tuan, head of the animation software company Paceworks, who said the deal "means that Apple will still be around in five years," the lifespan of the agreement.

Anti-trust experts in Washington, however, were following the arrangement closely.

A Justice Department spokeswoman said that either the department or the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) were "likely to take a look" at the deal, a broad patent cross-licensing agreement to enable the two firms to cooperate closely on new technol-

ogies for Apple's Mac Platform.

The proposed arrangement was designed to breathe new life into Apple, once a dominant player in the U.S. computer industry but which has seen its market share dwindle to around five per cent.

The California-based company has lost \$1.64 billion in the past 18 months while undergoing a series of wrenching top-level personnel changes.

Microsoft by contrast has gone from strength to strength and has consequently attracted scrutiny from U.S. regulatory agencies.

A.G. Edwards Technology Industry analyst Jim Johnson said Microsoft's overture to Apple was understandable, as it was in its own interest to maintain competition in the

software market.

"It's in Microsoft's interests, in terms of anti-trust matters, to keep Apple from failing. And given Apple has only about a five to seven per cent share of the total software systems market, it clearly isn't going to concern Microsoft," Mr. Johnson said.

Under the agreement — which was completed just minutes before the announcement — Microsoft will develop and ship future versions of its Microsoft office productivity suite, Internet explorer and other Microsoft tools for the Mac Platform.

Apple will bundle the Microsoft Internet explorer browser with the Mac OS, making it the default browser in future operating system software releases.

Apple and Microsoft also plan to collaborate on technology to ensure compatibility between their respective virtual machines for Java and other programming languages.

"We don't anticipate any regulatory challenges or hurdles," Microsoft chief financial officer Greg Maffei told a conference call for analysts and reporters.

He said the structure of the proposed relationship, involving the purchase of stock to be held for a minimum of three years in a non-voting capacity, meant that Microsoft would not likely file details of the agreement with federal authorities.

He dismissed suggestions that by investing in Apple Microsoft was seeking to deflect Justice Department or FTC attention.

APICORP issues \$225m in Eurobonds

RIYADH (AFP) — The finance group Arab Petroleum Investment Corporation (APICORP) announced Monday it has issued \$225 million worth of Eurobonds in London.

It was the first borrowing in the Euromarkets for the Saudi-based APICORP, which was set up in 1975 by the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

APICORP said an

international consortium arranged the loan, grouping Arab Banking Corporation based in Bahrain, Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, JP Morgan Securities and Union Bank of Switzerland.

The company said it will "use this loan to meet the growing demand for financing of gas, oil and petrochemical projects in Arab countries and elsewhere."

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JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET									
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN									
TELEPHONE: 807171 / 807119									
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 09/08/1997									
PART 12 MONTHS HIGH	PART 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE
298,000	218,500	ARAB BANK	11.5	1.37	4	400	218500	218.50	218.50
2,340	1,320	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	29	29049	59987	2.24	2.24
3,400	2,700	RANK OF JORDAN	6.4	0.00	5	3550	109036	3.25	3.25
1,210	880	MID. EAST INTL. BK.	61.7	0.00	0	200	108	0.94	0.94
1,480	1,250	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	9.6	0.00	1	1600	4155	2.31	2.31
5,200	4,500	THE HOUSING BK.	14.5	4.01	6	1224	5428	4.82	4.84
4,180	2,440	JOR. FINANCIAL BANK	10.7	0.00	3	659	1983	3.01	3.01
1,050	780	JOR. GULF BANK	16.7	0.00	5	4550	4059	0.9	0.9
3,870	1,450	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	17.1	0.00	1	200	720	3.55	3.55
4,650	3,480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.9	3.07	13	10658	41629	3.91	3.91
1,100	1,110	UNION DEV. INV. LTD.	9	0.00	3	6250	8632	1.28	1.28
3,800	3,000	JOR. INV. FTR. BANK	21.2	0.00	7	641	2777	3.32	3.30
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 216.42	%CHG: +0.02	75	90981	353431		
2,930	2,700	JORDAN INSURANCE	12.0	1.36	1	1937	5424	2.80	2.80
2,860	1,990	JORDAN GULF INSUR.	9	0.00	1	200	442	2.32	2.32
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 113.47	%CHG: -0.31	4	2137	5866		
1,820	1,500	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	8.0	6.02	13	4737	7867	1.67	1.66
1,540	1,320	IBRID ELECTRICITY	8.0	6.02	13	4737	7867	1.67	1.66
7,500	6,000	VEHICLE OWNERS FED.	7.2	5.30	1	400	2640	6.60	6.60
2,050	2,150	SHIPPING LINES	16.9	4.48	3	2050	5945	3.05	2.90
1,550	820	IND. PORTFOLIO	16.7	0.00	11	5450	7895	1.40	1.39
1,890	1,150	MID. EAST HOTELS	19.2	0.00	22	10100	12575	1.20	1.26
3,720	2,890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	7.8	0.00	5	2500	7410	2.93	2.98
1,220	930	ZARQA EDUCATION	9	0.00	1	500	490	0.97	0.98
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 109.42	%CHG: -0.23	60	26487	45589		
4,450	3,220	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	26.6	2.78	9	1937	7650	4.00	3.95
4,140	2,750	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	11.0	2.53	8	50082	197823	3.95	3.96
10,250	9,040	JOR. FTR. INV. REFURBARY	9.6	0.00	12	13150	13515	9.93	9.95
3,260	1,650	INDUSTRIAL CORN. MGR.	9	0.00	7	790	1254	1.72	1.72
4,180	3,040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	12.2	4.94	9	948	3817	4.06	4.05
1,800	1,310	JOR. PHARM. MANF.	6.11	0.00	3	250	329	1.31	1.31
5,650	4,300	DAR ALDINIA DV. INV.	13.0	4.72	8	1593	8438	5.40	5.30
3,850	2,400	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.6	10.37	5	710	1705	2.45	2.41
850	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.7	0.00	7	6200	2852	0.46	0.46
1,310	1,000	ARAB PAPER CORP. TRD.	31.8	0.00	13	14850	15394	1.03	1.04
1,520	850	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	4	1500	1220	0.85	0.81
1,080	530	JOR. PHOSPHATE TRD.	9	0.00	3	750	480	0.64	0.64
940	530	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	9	0.00	2	700	420	0.61	0.60
1,670	1,120	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	17.1	5.22	9	2026	2708	1.34	1.34
2,000	1,080	UNIV. HOUS. ENDS	9	0.00	7	1200	1416	1.18	1.18
1,510	990	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	14.0	9.62	9	3522	3662	1.05	1.04
1,620	1,300	NATL. CHARITIE	14.4	4.58	21	5950	85517	1.54	1.53
1,070	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.4	0.00	13	1600	14028	0.84	0.84
2,090	1,340	EL-ZAT READY WEAR	56.0	0.00	29	11100	17381	1.57	1.59
1,310	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.3	0.00	9	7300	8393	1.24	1.25
1,260	880	UNION CH. & VEG.	43.2	0.00	15	6500	6149	0.93	0.95
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 123.77	%CHG: -0.28	205	186022	394498		
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 166.05	%CHG: -0.12	344	305627	799383		
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 09/08/1997									
710	410	MACH. EXP. RENT. HAIN.	9	0.00	1	250	133	0.56	0.53
660	410	JOR. TRADE PAC.	10.9	0.00	12	10500	4305	0.41	0.41
950	540	JOR. FTR. INV. REFURBARY	9.6	0.00	12	20150	13515	9.93	9.95
840	660	UNION INV. 501	9	0.00	7	50000	9500	0.69	0.69
620	370	ARAB FTR. INVEST.	9	0.00	21	31250	12513	0.41	0.40
950	720	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	9	0.00	5	2100	1827	0.87	0.87
950	630	AL-DAMLATIAN 754	64.3	0.00	8	6550	2781	0.69	0.67
750	400	NATL. HVEL. ENG. MANICO	9	0.00	34	81950	40400	0.50	0.49
710	820	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	34.4	0.00	6	6000	3040	0.76	0.76
730	580	NIDEAST PHARM. 754	2	0.00	20	16036	6413	0.64	0.65
670	550	RACI PHARM. 854	2	0.00	3	1300	585	0.60	0.60
570	320	INDS. ENG.	9	0.00	9	8800	2982	0.34	0.34
860	730	INDS. CERAMIC	19.1	0.00	7	4450	3249	0.74	0.73
820	590	NATL. POULTRY	8	0.00	3	4000	2498	0.62	0.63
1,000	730	NAT. ALUMINUM 754	9	0.00	10	18450	9225	0.76	0.75
860	590	MID. EAST COMPLEX	7.8	15.87	23	25500	16095	0.64	0.63
GRAND TOTAL					196	285286	124897		

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British Formula One driver Damon Hill adjusts his helmet, during the qualifying at the Hungaroring on August 9. Schumacher finished with the fastest time and takes the pole position Sunday's Grand Prix. Jacques Villeneuve driving a Williams-Renault finished second and world champion Damon Hill in his Yamaha-powered Arrows took the third fastest time (Reuters photo)

Sampras, Chang advance, as Muster struggles

MASON, Ohio (R) — Top seed Pete Sampras and second seed Michael Chang expended little energy in winning quarter-final matches Friday but fifth seed Thomas Muster had a long struggle against Jan Siemerink at the ATP Championship Friday.

It took Muster two hours, 43 minutes to grind out a 6-7 (1-7) 7-6 (7-3) 7-6 (7-5) against the 36th-ranked Dutchman.

By contrast, Sampras beat seventh-seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia 6-2 6-2 in a brief 53 minutes, and Chang scored a 6-1 6-2 victory over 10th-seeded Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil in 57 minutes.

With the win, Chang reached his sixth consecutive ATP Championship semifinal. He won the title here in 1993 and 1994 and reached the final the past two years.

In a match between Spaniards, 14th-seeded Albert Costa emerged the victor over sixth-seeded Sergi Bruguera when at 4-6

6-3 5-2 Bruguera retired from the match with cramps that started in his left leg. Earlier in the week, Bruguera was experiencing problems with his neck.

The semifinals pit Sampras against the 17th-ranked Costa and Muster against Chang.

Muster holds a 5-2 edge over Chang. Sampras beat Costa both times they played.

Sampras won here in 1992 but lost in the quarter-finals the past two years at the ATP championship.

"I played just about as well as I could. I couldn't play any better," Sampras said. "He, I think, started to press a little bit because he saw me serving very big. I served just about as well as I could serve."

Chang lost to Kuerten 6-3 6-1 in 57 minutes last week in the semifinals at Montreal.

"Last week was Gustavo's time, this week was my time," Chang said. "We played the reverse roles. The matches were almost a

straight reversal."

Six of the eight players in the quarter-finals were ranked in the top 10 in the world — No. 1 Sampras, No. 2 Chang, No. 4 Muster, No. 6 Kafelnikov, No. 8 Bruguera and No. 10 Kuerten. Only Costa and Siemerink are not members of this elite group.

Dealing with Siemerink, a fellow left-hander, was a difficult task for Muster as the Dutchman played serve-and-volley the entire match.

Muster's strategy to lob against Siemerink failed miserably except on the final point of the match, when the Austrian finally hit a winning lob which sailed way over Siemerink's head and too far back to run down.

"I didn't lob well except that last one, maybe the most important one," Muster said. "He puts a lot of pressure on you because he gives you one, two metres where you can pass."

Blanc on target for Marseille

PARIS (R) — France defender Laurent Blanc rekindled Marseille dreams of a return to past glories as his third goal in two matches gave them a 1-0 home win over Nantes in the French First Division on Friday.

The victory gave former European champions Marseille maximum points along with four other sides, including Metz who went top on goal difference after a 4-1 home rout of Bordeaux with two goals by striker Bruno Rodriguez. Paris St Germain are second after their 3-2 away win over Auxerre on Thursday, ahead of Marseille. Bastia and promoted Toulouse, who both won 1-0.

Champions Monaco had to come from behind to win their first point in two matches in a surprise 2-2 draw at home against Chateauroux after striker Didier Martel scored twice in nine minutes for the Second Division champions. Blanc, the division's top scorer, curled a free kick over the Nantes wall and into the Nantes goal over the despairing dive of teenage goalkeeper Mickael Landreau in the 41st minute, his second free kick success since Saturday.

"We've taken maximum points at home, now people are going to be able to judge our value away," Blanc said. Monaco went ahead in the 40th minute through Chadian forward Japhet N'Doram but needed a 67th minute goal from an overhead kick by another new signing Stephane Carnot to secure a point after Martel had scored with a curling free kick and a low shot early in the second half.

Chateauroux held out for a draw after needing to bring on reserve goalkeeper Eric Loussouarn for Frederic Guegen, who took a knock in the face trying to prevent Carnot's equaliser.

Strasbourg striker David Zitelli became one of seven players to have scored twice in two games when his late goals saw his side come from behind to beat Lens 2-1.

Le Havre bounced back from a 3-1 defeat at Marseille last weekend to crush Montpellier 4-0 at home.

Hingis wins; Frazier downs Sanchez to reach Acura semis

MANHATTAN BEACH, California (R) — World No. 1 Martina Hingis, playing so well she joked about joining the men's circuit, raced past sixth-seeded Anke Huber 6-3 6-0 Friday night to gain the semifinals of the \$450,000 Acura Classic Friday.

"I felt if I closed my eyes and hit the ball, maybe it would still be in," Hingis said of her blinding 54-minute victory over the ninth-ranked Huber. "I hit some unbelievable shots."

The Swiss 16-year-old will meet defending champion Lindsay Davenport of the United States in the semis. Davenport, the fourth seed, beat unseeded Nathalie Tauziat of France 6-1 3-6 6-3.

Amy Frazier, meanwhile, surprised fifth-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain 3-6 6-1 6-3, setting up a clash with second-seeded Monica Seles.

Hingis is playing with so much confidence she speculated about her chances playing against the world's top men.

"Men's tennis is slower than women's tennis, they just have better serves," she jibed.

When asked if she could rally against the likes of Thomas Muster and Michael Chang, she replied: "They would kill me. They play with so much power. I would rather play someone like Boris Becker. Someone who likes to have short rallies. But he would have to have one serve."

Hingis stretched her career mark to 6-1 against Huber but not before engaging in some sparkling rallies, until Huber began to unravel in the second set, falling behind 0-3.

"There were three games I didn't put the ball back in," Huber said of her collapse. "I got a little crazy and stopped playing. I wasn't on the court any-



Amy Frazier of the U.S. makes the two-handed return against Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain August 8 in the quarterfinals of the Acura Classic. Frazier beat Vicario 3-6 6-1 6-3 (Reuters photo)

more."

Huber has seen a boost in Hingis's confidence since the teen became World No. 1 on March 31. "She's even more confident than in March. When she's hitting the ball, it's like she's closing her eyes and it's going in. She doesn't play especially fast and doesn't move great. She's just there when it's important."

"You always think the important points you have to do something special but she doesn't miss."

Davenport allowed Tauziat just 11 points in the 20-minute opening set. But the seventh-ranked American was unable to keep up the torrid pace as Tauziat evened the match.

"I played unbelievable in the first set, but stopped returning well and missed a ton of serves," said Davenport of the second-set lapse.

The 1996 Olympic gold medalist regained her form in the deciding set, breaking twice for a 4-0 lead before holding on to nail down the one-hour, 24-minute win.

"It's always nice to be able to start over again once you lose it, especially in the third," she said. "I was able to regroup, hold my serve easily, and break right away to pull it out."

It's a big win — the semifinals.

Davenport knows it won't be easy against Hingis.

"She's got great hands and you always have to be prepared that when you hit a good shot, she's going to hit a good shot back."

Sanchez Vicario has had difficulty closing out matches recently, and has slipped to eighth in the rankings as a consequence. Frazier's punishing groundstrokes, which produced 25 winners and 31 unforced errors, contributed to her departure.

YWCA hosts USPTA Little Tennis

AMMAN (J.T.) — The YWCA in Amman will host a new national tennis programme to introduce young children to the sport in a fun, group environment. The programme offers athletic instruction and social activities for children of various ages, and is organised by local tennis-teaching professionals.

USPTA Little Tennis, a unique series of tennis activities and leagues for children, is beginning on Sept. 5th, 1997, for a duration of 12 weeks.

The Programme combines group lessons, fun activities, tennis carnival, leagues, with modified equipment along with parents and teaching professionals who join in the common goal of athletically developing children, ages 3 to 10.

USPTA Little Tennis is designed by the United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA), the World's oldest and largest Association of tennis-teaching professionals.

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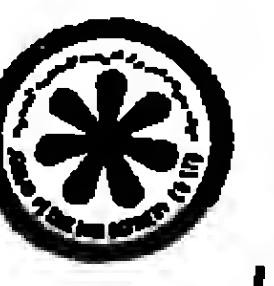


JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY CO., TENDER NOS. 6,7,8/97 UPGRADING OF AMMAN, SALADIN AND ZARQA LPG FILLING STATION PROJECTS

Jordan Petroleum Refinery Co. announces the extension of the a.m. tender according to the following dates:

- Submission of prequalification documents not later than 12:00 hrs of 13.9.1997 at the company Head Office.
- Eligible contractors to obtain tender documents from the company's head office against non-refundable JD200 per set. Not later than 12:30 hrs of 22.9.1997
- Offers must be submitted at the company's head office with an alternative offer with finance not later than 12:00 hrs of Sunday 19.10.1997.

Chairman



JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY COMPANY LTD. AMMAN - JORDAN TENDER INVITATION FOR BIDDING TENDER NO. 10/97 UPGRADING OF LPG CYLINDERS FACTORY PROJECT

Jordan Petroleum Refinery Co. Ltd., announces Tender Invitation No. 10/97 for the design, supply, installation (excluding civil works) and commissioning of "Upgrading LPG Cylinders Factory (cylinder capacity 26.2 litre) Project" at Zarqa which includes all materials, machines and equipment required for the above mentioned project.

The tender(s) to be submitted on the basis of a "lump sum fixed price job" for the detailed design, supply of equipment and materials, installation, inspection, testing and commissioning of the project. Eligible contractors may obtain tender documents from the company's head office at the First Circle, Jabal Amman, against non-refundable JD(100) per set, not later than 12:30 hrs of 20/9/1997. Contractors who possess experience in the same field and are qualified financially and technically, and who wish to participate in the above tender, are invited to submit their offers at the company's head office not later than 12:00 hrs of 9/11/1997. With an alternative offer with finance.

Tenders should include with their offers the following:

- 1- Financial capability of the contractor (financial references latest 3 annual reports to be provided).
- 2- Technical capability of the contractor, including details of experience and background of personnel, specifications of available equipment, etc.
- 3- Detailed documents showing similar projects executed by the contractor, full names and addresses of firms, for whom such services were rendered, and details of projects including contract cost and completion periods.

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Iranian ruling factions squabble over Khatami's new government

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's ruling factions squabbled openly over the line-up of President Mohammad Khatami's new cabinet Saturday, a day ahead of its presentation to the deeply conservative parliament.

Islamic radicals, back in power under Mr. Khatami after eight years out in the cold, accused Islamic conservatives of pressuring Mr. Khatami to prevent him choosing "revolutionaries" as his ministers.

"Over the past few days, those who lost the last elections are putting pressure on Mr. Khatami on his choice of ministers," said Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, a spokesman for the radical faction.

"Our concern is that he cannot choose colleagues capable of achieving programmes desired by a billion Muslims in the world," said Mr. Mohtashemi, a former interior minister who is close to Mr. Khatami.

The radicals, who make up the hardline wing of Mr. Khatami's leftist-moderate power base, fear the conservatives are trying to keep them out of the cabinet.

Mr. Khatami, 54, who was sworn in Monday after a stunning victory in May presidential elections, is to present his cabinet list to parliament for approval Sunday.

The assembly, which is dominated by conservatives including Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri whom Mr. Khatami defeated in the election, will have one week

to consider the list.

Mr. Khatami has reportedly broken with tradition by appointing the first woman as a vice president since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Getting his line-up through parliament is the first challenge for Mr. Khatami, a former culture minister and relative moderate who was swept to victory on a platform of social and economic change.

Radical newspapers, criticising an earlier decision to retain Hassan Habibi as first vice president, urged the new president to have the courage of his convictions Saturday.

"Mr. Khatami must satisfy the hopes of the people who voted for him and overcome the obstacles preventing him from appointing a strong government," the daily Salam wrote.

However, the conservatives appear to have won some victories already by threatening to reject controversial choices of minister when they come before parliament.

A proposal to appoint Mohammad Mussavi-Khoeni, a radical and former spokesman of the hostage-takers at the U.S. embassy in Tehran, as intelligence minister has been ruled out under conservative pressure, newspapers close to Mr. Khatami reported.

"The problem of the intelligence minister has not yet been resolved and the ministry has no minister," the weekly Bahman said

Iran's president appoints first woman to senior post

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has named Massoumeh Ebtekar to the post of vice-president in charge of protecting the environment, the first time a woman has held such a post since the 1979 Islamic revolution, the Iran News reported Saturday.

Ms. Ebtekar, 36, will also become director of the Iranian Organisation for the Protection of the Environment, the newspaper said.

Mr. Khatami is due to present his cabinet list Sunday to Iran's conservative-dominated parliament, which then has a week to approve the appointments.

A former journalist, doctor specialising in immunology and a university professor, Ms. Ebtekar has been a member of official Iranian delegations to several international organisations.

Married with two sons, Ms. Ebtekar spent her first years of study in the United States, Iran News said.

Women, young people and intellectuals came out in force to give their support to Mr. Khatami in May's presidential election which he won with an unprecedented 69 per cent of the vote.

Saturday.

Conservatives have also threatened to withhold their confidence from moderate Ataollah Mohajeri, a vice president who has been put forward as culture minister, and from radical MP Abdullah Nouri who has been tipped as interior minister.

Moderate supporters of Mr. Khatami say the conservative spoiling campaign against the new government is not only limited to the political arena.

They accuse the conservative-dominated judiciary of ordering a wave of arrests of officials close to Tehran's moderate mayor, Gholam

Hussein Karbastshi, as part of a political campaign.

Islamic conservatives not only dominate parliament and the judiciary, they also have a tight grip on other state institutions such as public radio and television.

Mr. Khatami is also certain to face challenges from the hardline paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the last word on all political and religious decisions.

In an apparent call for unity between rival factions within the ruling clergy, Mr. Khatami called Monday for "close cooperation between all of the institutions" of the government.



PHOENICIAN HISTORY UNRAVELLED: A Lebanese worker cleans the remnants of a Phoenician cemetery found in the southern Lebanese ancient port city of Tyre, the first such discovery in the Eastern Mediterranean coasts (AFP photo)

Yemeni tribesmen abduct Italian man

SANAA (AP) — Armed Yemeni tribesmen have kidnapped an Italian tourist, the Italian embassy said Saturday.

Giorgio Bonanomi, a 49-year-old graphic artist from Merate in northern Italy, was abducted by tribesmen Wednesday, an embassy spokesman said.

It was the second kidnapping of Italian tourists in two weeks.

The embassy received a letter from Mr. Bonanomi Friday saying he was being treated well and was in good health, spokesman Roberto Visperini said.

Mr. Bonanomi was travelling with six other tourists

from Rada, some 130 kilometres southeast of Sanaa, when armed kidnappers from the Dhabin tribe stopped their four-wheel vehicle and snatched him.

Mr. Bonanomi was easiest to grab because he was sitting next to the driver, Mr. Visperini said.

Government negotiators have begun talks with the tribe for the release of Mr. Bonanomi, officials said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. They did not say what the tribe was demanding for his release.

Yemeni tribes have frequently kidnapped tourists, oil workers and diplomats

to press their demands for money or government financing of projects. The tourists have all been released unharmed.

Two Italian tourists were kidnapped on July 26 and released 36 hours later. They said they had been well-treated in captivity and continued their sightseeing trip before leaving the country.

This year, tribesmen also have seized an American and 11 Germans. All were released unharmed.

Yemen, a country on the southwest corner of the Arabian peninsula, is one of the Arab world's poorest countries.

Nurses' lawyers aim to silence family to escape beheadings

RIYADH (AFP) — Lawyers of two British nurses accused of killing an Australian colleague are to step up efforts in a Saudi court Sunday to have the victim's family barred from pressing for the women to be beheaded if convicted.

On the eve of the trial resuming after a two-week break, the defence welcomed an Australian court's ruling to slap a temporary injunction on victim Yvonne Gilford's brother from repeating his calls for the nurses' execution.

The court Friday also ordered that the defence be given copies of the medical records of Yvonne's elderly mother, Muriel Gilford, the lawyers said.

This evidence will be submitted to the Islamic court in the eastern Saudi city of Khobar Sunday, as part of efforts to have the family excluded from giving its verdict, said the Salah Hejailan firm.

Under the Islamic laws of Sharia, the family has the right to spare the lives of convicted killers of their relatives and instead accept "blood money" — an option which brother Frank Gilford has so far ruled out.

The Riyadh-based law firm which initiated the trial with a trial for the nurses, who have been behind bars for the last eight months, hailed the Australian court's ruling against Frank Gilford as "a

major breakthrough."

Muriel Gilford, who lives in a nursing home, is said to have Alzheimer's disease and the defence has argued that she is mentally incompetent to rule on the issue of execution.

The state supreme court in Adelaide gave its verdict after hearing that, under Saudi law, a call for the death penalty by a victim's family must be unanimous.

Frank Gilford has said he represents both himself and his mother — the victim's closest surviving relatives — through a power of attorney. But the defence challenged its validity because of her mental health.

If the family is ruled out of making a decision because of the mother, a "guardian" could be appointed in Australia but the death sentence would no longer be an option, according to the Hejailan firm.

Mr. Dark said he hoped the trial, which opened on May 19 and has been adjourned several times to clarify the status of the Gilford family, would be over "in a matter of weeks rather than months."

But another of the nurses' lawyers, Dick Whittington, told the court in South Australia that the women could be convicted and sentenced Sunday.

A lawyer for the Gilfords, Michael Boylan, argued that the request for the injunction was an attempt to interfere in the Saudi proceedings and an abuse of legal process.

McLauchlan, 31, and Parry, 41, were arrested after the killing last December of Yvonne Gilford, a 55-year-old senior theatre nurse at the King Fahd military medical complex in Dhahran, near Khobar.

The Britons deny killing their colleague and say they were forced to make signed confessions under threat of sexual mistreatment from interrogators.

Michael Dark of the Hejailan firm told Britain's domestic press agency PA news that the Saudi court would now "say there can be no unanimous decision made because Mrs. Gilford cannot make this decision as she is not competent. Or it might be decided that some sort of guardian should be appointed to make the decision on her behalf."

Mr. Dark said he hoped the trial, which opened on May 19 and has been adjourned several times to clarify the status of the Gilford family, would be over "in a matter of weeks rather than months."

But another of the nurses' lawyers, Dick Whittington, told the court in South Australia that the women could be convicted and sentenced Sunday.

A lawyer for the Gilfords, Michael Boylan, argued that the request for the injunction was an attempt to interfere in the Saudi proceedings and an abuse of legal process.

Across hill and dale, Palestinians attempt to elude Israel's iron wall

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — It took four days, but Sonia Sawafat managed to elude the toughest Israeli closure ever on the occupied territories to get from her West Bank home to Jerusalem to nurse her hospitalised child.

Over dirt roads, through mountains and valleys, by car and by donkeys, Palestinians have tried to find ways to move, go shopping and even get married amid a maze of Israeli military checkpoints.

Ms. Sawafat, 20, told Agence France Presse she gave birth to her daughter Manal a week before the double suicide bombing in Jerusalem which killed 15 people and led Israel to impose a seal on the occupied territories and a closure between the West Bank's towns and villages.

Manal was born with a birth defect — a closed trachea — and Ms. Sawafat took her to Jerusalem and left her in hospital for an operation.

But while Manal lay in the recovery ward and Ms. Sawafat waited at home, the closure descended and trapped Ms. Sawafat inside her home village near Nablus in the northern West Bank.

"For three days I tried everything. I went to the checkpoint outside my village every day and explained to the soldiers my situation. Then I wept, then I begged. But the answer was always, no," she said.

Finally she changed tactics. By foot, she sneaked around the checkpoint out of the soldiers' sight, found a car on the main road to take her as close to Jerusalem as possible, then

walked around the Jerusalem checkpoint the same way.

"I reached the hospital, where I found they had brought a 'temporary mother' to nurse Manal. So I spent the day there taking care of her," she said. Israel has imposed closures periodically on the territories since 1993 and the Palestinians have over time come up with creative solutions for dealing with the numerous checkpoints which dot the West Bank.

But the seal imposed by Israel for the past 10 days is the harshest ever, with even back roads blocked by temporary barriers cutting off one Palestinian village from another.

"This is the toughest we've ever faced, even since the intifada," the 1987-1993 uprising against the occupation, said Suhail Shaaban, 43, who as a Bethlehem cab driver has to face daily the problems of transportation in the West Bank.

In response, Palestinians have set up "bypass roads." Narrow dirt trails through the mountains which have hardly been trod by a human foot for years now see caravans of cars inching along them.

The Israeli army has fought back by using airplanes to scout out the tracks which bulldozers then block with concrete blocks or mounds of dirt.

But the cat and mouse game moves on as the Palestinians find another route even further out of the way.

Or they change means of transport to go from village to village, relying on the trusty donkey.

Palestinian papers reported

that Israeli soldiers attacked two 13-year-old boys who tried to "infiltrate" past their checkpoint on a donkey, carrying food into their village.

The boys were beaten. The offending donkey took a blow from a rifle butt, the paper said.

For many, the simple feat of moving from village to village has become a "victory over attempts to subjugate and humiliate" the Palestinians, as Mahmoud Rajih, a newlywed from Silwad, a village east of Ramallah, put it.

Mr. Rajih slipped past innumerable checkpoints to reach the village of Kharbata, west of Ramallah, to fetch his bride then return with her and her guests to his village for their wedding.

Similarly Halima Subh, 55, said she insisted on walking the 10 kilometres across valley and hill every day from her home village to Bethlehem with her basket of vegetables for sale in the market.

"I won't let anyone starve me and my children to death," she said.

Israel eased the closure Friday, allowing motion in and out of two West Bank cities, Nablus and Jericho, and through border crossings to Jordan and Egypt.

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to keep the bulk of sanctions in place until the Palestinian National Authority steps up its fight against anti-Israeli radicals.

Palestinian officials have said the closure causes economic losses of between \$7 and \$9 million per day.

Islamists kill 14 civilians in Algeria — papers

PARIS (R) — Suspected Islamist guerrillas have killed 14 civilians by cutting their throats or heads in four attacks across Algeria this week, Algerian newspapers said Saturday.

Four girls, one woman and three men were killed, their heads cut off, in a rebel attack Thursday in Ouled Yahia village in Taret province, 240 kilometres southeast of Algiers, Al Watan and Liberte newspapers said.

Suspected rebels slashed the throats of two shepherds, aged 17 and 22, in the same day in Bab Taza in the province of Tiencen, about 440 kilometres west Algiers, they said.

A truck driver and his assistant were killed in the same way near the town of Bou-Saada, some 200 kilometres south of Algiers, the newspapers said.

Two other civilians were killed Wednesday in Oued Djer province, some 130 kilometres southwest of Algiers, the newspapers said.

The latest killings brought to more than 1,000 the number of people reported slaughtered in a series of mass killings since June 5, when Algeria held a general election which voters and officials hoped would help usher in peace and stability.

Most of the dead, around 700, were civilians, but Algerian newspapers also said that 300 rebels were killed in a two-week government military offensive in July.

Algeria's President Liamine Zerrouk, speaking against a background of years of bloodshed which Algerian officials blame on Islamists, told a police meeting Thursday that his country had made "heavy sacrifices in its struggle against the forces of evil."

About 60,000 people have been killed in the North African country since early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election in which radical Islamists had taken a huge lead.

Somali leaders slip out for peace

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Three top lieutenants of Somali warlord Hussein Mohammed Aided slipped across the green line to an arch-rival's stronghold and took a flight out the country to discuss a peace initiative, a witness said Saturday.

General Elmi Sahal Ali, Gen. Aided's police commander, and two other close aides slipped into north Mogadishu and flew to Djibouti from Aisley airstrip, controlled by north Mogadishu strongman Ali Mahdi Mohammed's Somali Salvation Alliance Faction, a Somali journalist who was on the scene said.

General Ali, along with Gen. Aided's foreign policy chief Mohammed Warsame "Kimiko" and Ali Mohamed Ali "Ugas Ali," a prominent clan elder and deputy governor of Gen. Aided's controlled part of south Mogadishu, were flying to Djibouti for talks with people from Bossaso in northeast Somalia who are opposed to peace initiatives by Ethiopia.

These initiatives were due to be concluded in Bossaso next November by 26 Somali factions, including Ali Mahdi, who first met and forged a peace accord in the Ethiopian tourist resort of Sodere, 200 kilometres east of the capital

Addis Ababa last January. Ali Mahdi is in Addis Ababa for talks with Ethiopian leaders and the U.N. special envoy to Somalia, Ismail Kitarri, to persuade the international community to give logistic support to the Bossaso conference. The conference is bitterly opposed by Aided's faction and the breakaway republic of Somaliland.

Ali Mahdi and his colleagues were Gen. Aided's highest-ranking aides to use the Aisley airstrip, 20 kilometres north of Mogadishu, since the Somali civil war erupted 1991 after the overthrow of dictator Mohammed Siad Barre.

Indian woman wins husband with protest

NEW DELHI (AFP) — An Indian villager has forced her lover to marry her after camping outside his house for more than two weeks, a newspaper reported here Saturday. The Asian Age said B.C. Anitha, who claimed Putte Gowda was the father of her one-year-old child, refused to budge from outside his village home near Bangalore in the southern state of Karnataka. The 18-year-old had been sitting on the side of the road since July 23, it said. She was later joined by women activists supporting her case.

British child bride says marriage to waiter is over

ANKARA (AP) — The marriage of a British child bride and a Turkish waiter is over, the 14-year-old bride said in an interview published Saturday. She, Cook, now the mother of a nine-month-old son, told the daily Hurriyet that she would not return to Turkey and her husband, Musa Komeagac. She complained that her husband, Musa Komeagac, 18, had refused to let her go anywhere, not "even the movies or the park." When he was out, he phoned home constantly to make sure she was there, Cook said.

Garth Brooks didn't measure up in the Big Apple

NEW YORK (AFP) — Country music's biggest star, Garth Brooks, brought a free sample of his foot-stompin' fun to the Big Apple but failed to dent the hostility of the city's media watchdogs. Brooks gave a heavily promoted free concert in central park Thursday, filmed for broadcast by the cable television station HBO and ostentatiously endorsed by New York's publicity-avid Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. But hopes within the Brooks Organisation of winning over the hearts and minds of the most culture-conscious urban community in America was punctured by the caustic sting of Friday's reviews.

Cornish recognised as official language — report

LONDON (AFP) — The Cornish language, spoken in the fishing communities in the far west of England until the end of the last century, has been given official recognition by the British examination authorities. The Independent reported Saturday that students will now be able to sit public exams in the language, which has Celtic origins and dates from medieval times. The number of people who can speak Cornish in the world is thought to be less than 1,000.

Former Reagan security agent guilty of sex charges

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — A former secret service agent who helped protect former President Ronald Reagan was found guilty Friday of having sex with a minor and of drug possession. Timothy John O'Brien, 38, was found guilty by a jury here just under a week of deliberations. He faces a possible sentence of five years in prison. O'Brien served on Reagan's security detail at the former president's residence here when he was arrested last December. He was found guilty of having sex for about a month with the 16-year-old daughter of his best friend and of possessing drugs.

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Jordan Times, Sunday, August 10, 1997
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